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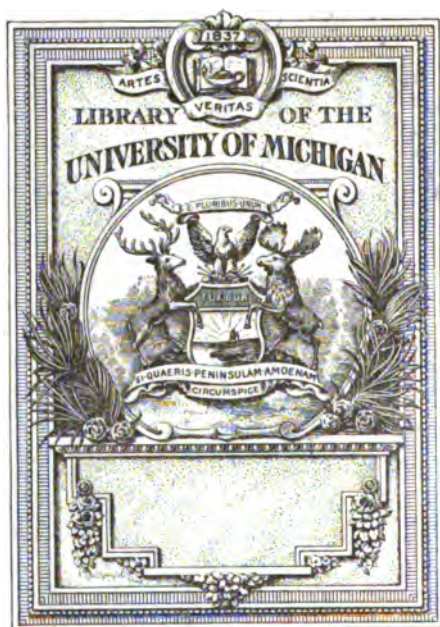
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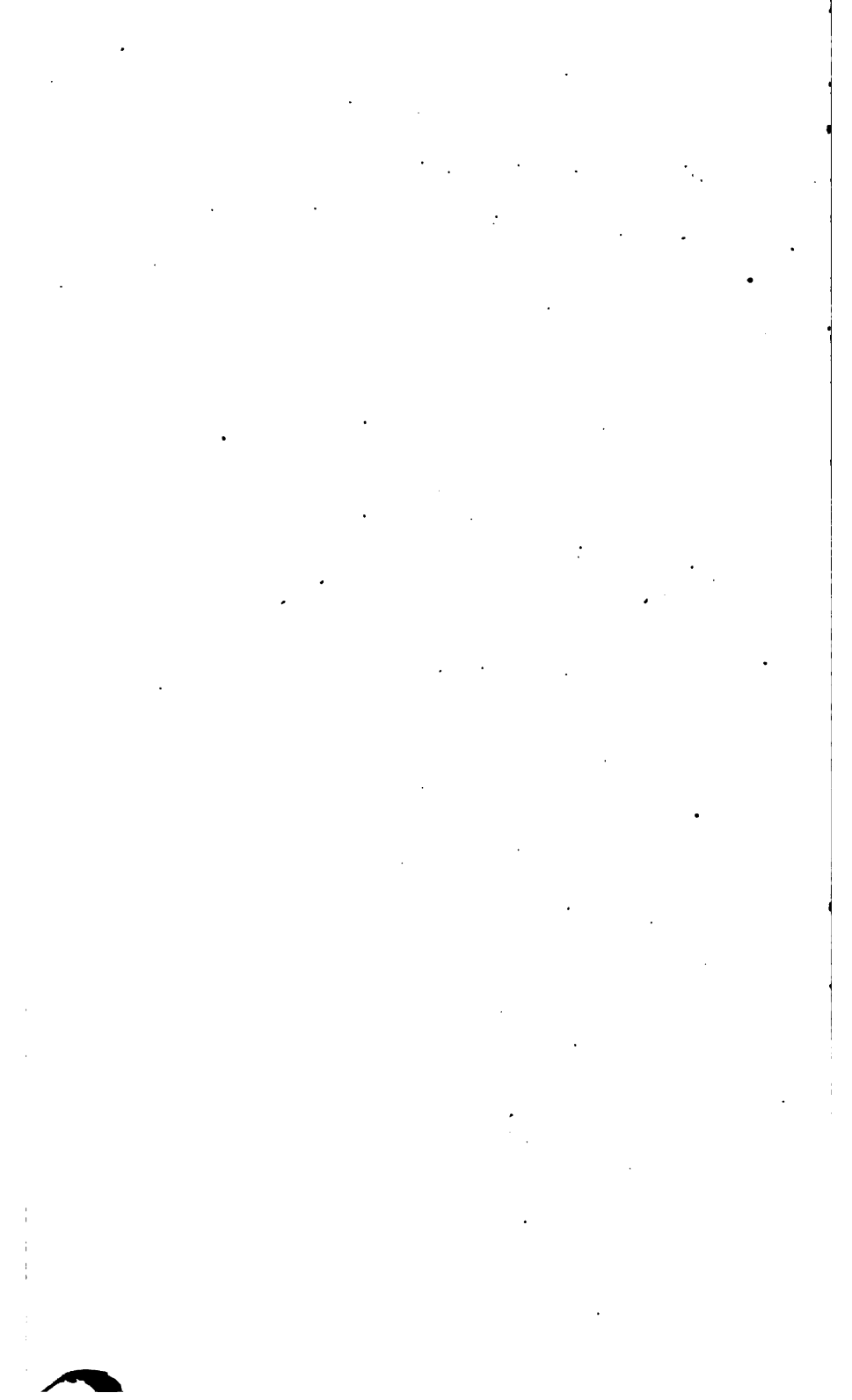
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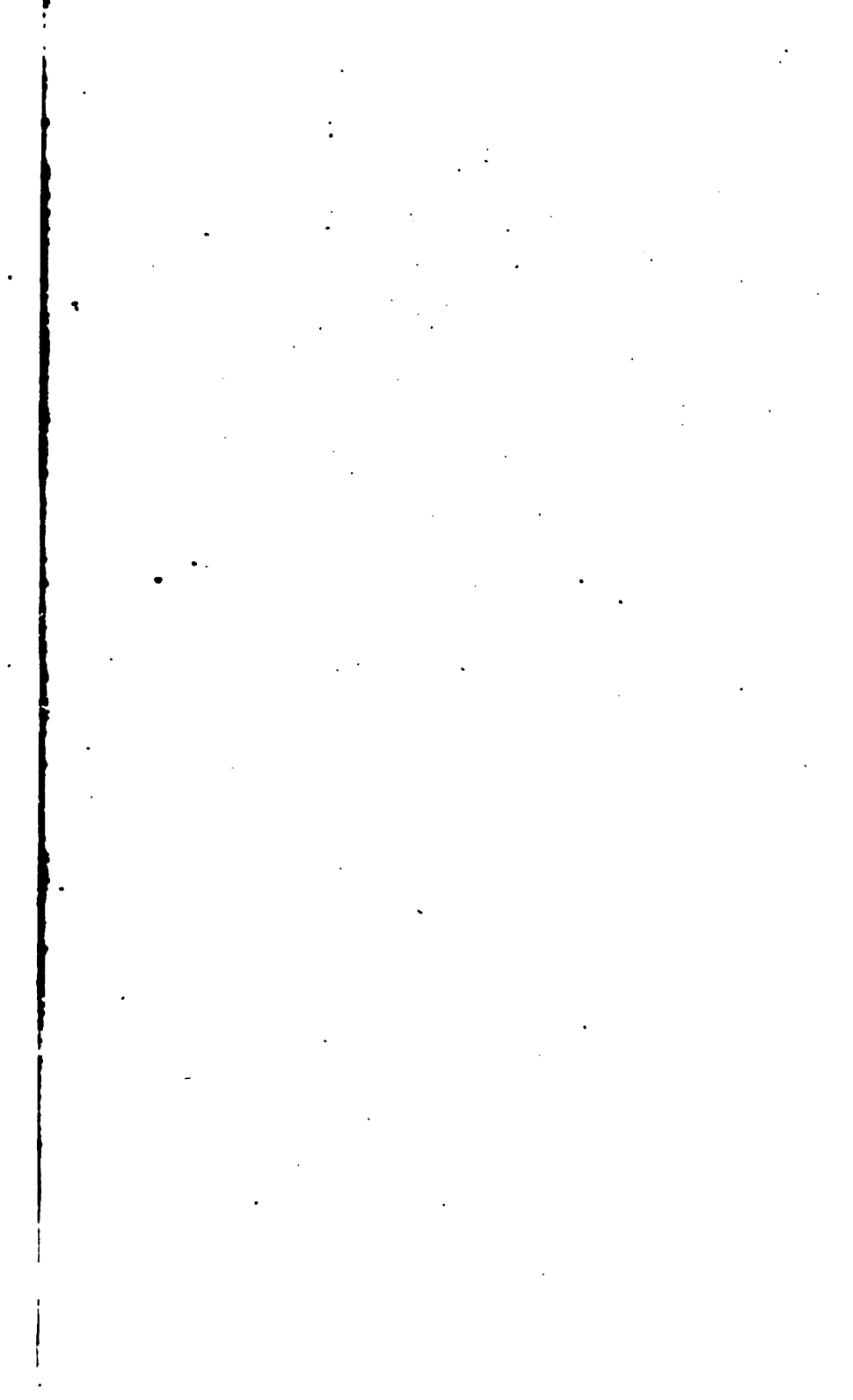
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JOHN MADDISON MORTON,
AUTHOR OF "BOX AND COX."

[See the Sketch.]

LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine.

LIGHT AND AMUSING READER.

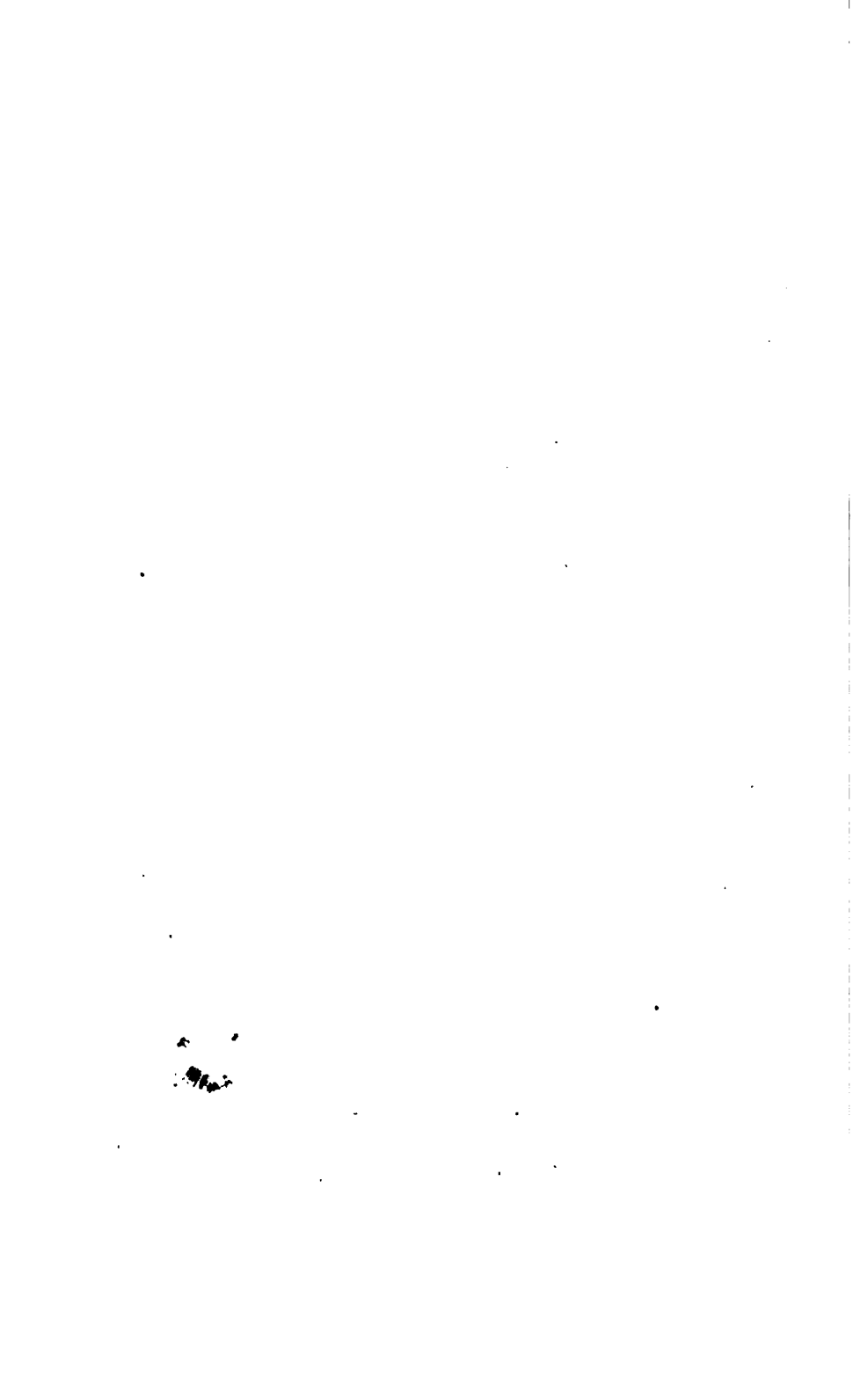
THE FIRST VOLUME.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

LONDON

51, GREAT QUEEN-STREET.

1856.



LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine

OF

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE .

FOR

THE HOURS OF RELAXATION.

VOLUME XLIX.

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LONDON SOCIETY.

JANUARY, 1838.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER I.

A LIFT IN LIFE.

EVERY woman would have chosen to be a man, they say, had she had the choice. Not I, for one. I can never be sufficiently thankful to the chance which, in appointing my place in creation *not* among the men, made me free from such troubles as theirs—beards and shaving-razors, high hats, and the necessity in marriage of making the offer, and risking a No in reply.

I thought so years ago, when I was a girl and sold oranges outside the British Museum. "Begin at the beginning;" you couldn't begin lower than that, unless you began as a beggar. Of course I know now how much more genteel is begging than selling. I've seen great ladies worry the money, or the life, out of their friends (whom the mendicity laws utterly fail to protect), in behalf of beneficent societies, benefiting no one but speak of, except the paid secretaries and collectors. But a nigger

I had all this still to learn, and, as an orange-seller, took precedence of the old woman with a bundle of rags wrapped in her shawl, to personate a baby, for whose dear sake she squeezed pennies out of the passers-by: one of a set that haunted the skirts of the Royal Society's palace of learning. We could discover. The folk are not more fish of the sea than we. I could not discover. All day long I searched my pockets, and sometimes my drawers, for a comfortable. As for the money, I was not able to afford it. I was likely they would have taken it.

side, I did not know what to do. I was not able to afford it. I was likely they would have taken it.

said that to little Judy, the dustman's daughter, who took afterwards to the tight-rope, and was thus lifted up over our heads—but the spirits will have their practical jokes!

One foggy day—fog and oranges don't agree—business was so slack that I left my basket and leaned against the railings, side by side with Tim the match-boy, a young shaver I chose never to know, even to nod to. Not that he begged. Worse, I more than half suspected his hands of a determination to other gentlemen's pockets—a mere suspicion; still, you must draw the line somewhere. But Tim was such a droll chap, and the day was so dull—I think I would have stooped lower for the sake of a good laugh. It was so foggy, too, that the fishmonger's boy and the milliner's apprentice over the way couldn't see us, and when none of your grand acquaintance are by to look on, which of you doesn't unbend sometimes?

"Betsy," he said, "here comes a hearse. Undertaker been to look up the mummies in there, you bet."

It was a gentleman leaving the Museum. Such a long face, such a long coat, such long arms, such long white choker-ends, you never beheld!

"Parson," I corrected the little ignoramus.

"Sort that don't smoke," muttered the match-boy, whom experience had made keen in such matters.

From the parson's pocket protruded an inch of red handkerchief.

"Silk," muttered Tim, with an appealing look at me. I flatter myself I returned it with one that froze the little rascal's reprobate blood in his veins, but the coveted article's owner, in passing, did better by drawing it out—threadbare and full of holes.

"Never knew hillies was in fashion in Noah's ark," muttered Tim, derisively. "Oh, s'life!" under his breath. "Thanks to your reverence!"

His reverence, in pulling out his handkerchief, had pulled out his pocket-book unawares; it dropped at Tim's very feet, whilst its possessor, passing on, was swallowed up in the fog directly.

Tim had it in his hand, and his hand in it, in a twinkling. Bank-notes crackled, his by adoption as I guessed, before ever he hissed in my ear, "Betsy, it's a fortune! Share and share alike."

Before the words were out of his mouth I had snatched the thing from him and darted after the lawful owner, shouting, "Stop thief!" by inadvertence. I soon caught up the funeral, very much excited and out of breath.

"Sir, sir!" I gasped at his elbow.

"Nothing for you," he returned sternly, taking me for a beggar.

"No, sir, something for *you*," I cried; but I had to thrust his property into his face before I could get him to look at it.

"Dropped, sir," I explained, delivering the leather-case into

his hands, and I saw him turn all the colours of the rainbow as he counted the notes. Five-and-twenty; his half-year's salary, as I heard afterwards, just drawn, and carried loose in his outside pocket. Such pound-foolish gentlemen, these parsons!

He turned to me, half-bothered, I fancy, and said:

"You are a good girl," severely. "Take this for your honesty," tendering twopence in coin of the realm. I could have cried, for I had made sure of a shilling at least, but he was such a queer figure as he stood with his hundred pounds clutched in his right hand, and holding out the coppers in his left, that I came near laughing instead. I drew myself up, and answered him firmly, out of a tract a lady had given me:

"Sir, I can take no reward for doing what was but my duty."

He seemed confounded. "Refuse twopence! The girl can't be altogether abandoned."

He looked me up and down, as if a thought had struck him, then muttered to himself:

"An orange-seller. Still, refuse twopence!"

I saw I had made an impression, and remained in the same attitude.

"What can you do?" he inquired doubtfully.

"Nothing, sir," I confessed without thinking.

"Neither read nor write? Scandalous!"

"Both, sir, and compound arithmetic, and physical geography, and parsing, and elementary science," I rattled off glibly. "Nothing that will keep me, I mean. I was in the first class, sir, when I was taken away from school, in the country. Father was a cabinet-maker, mother a dairy-woman. She left a good family, sir, to marry him. He died, and left her nothing, sir, but me. We got on as well as we could, which was as bad, sir, as well could be. But it's only the last six months, sir, since she's been dead, that I've sold oranges in the streets," I ended up, with a sob.

"Have you a character?" he asked.

I knew it was coming! I could have answered for mine without blushing, that it was good as gold; but where was the use? Don't tell me every one is supposed to be innocent until he's proved guilty. We poor folks are set down as lazy, dishonest, dirty, and intemperate, unless some one is by to swear to the contrary.

"Sir," said I, "the old woman who keeps me, in Hatton Garden, will tell you how I always brought her home faithfully all I took."

He only shook his head as he pocketed his portfolio. The notes crackled, which touched him.

"The fact is, we require an under-servant," he let out. "No wages, but a comfortable home."

Service, I found words to tell him, was the very thing upon

which my heart was set ; money no object, but a gentleman's family. He wrote down an address in a neighbouring street, and gave it me, saying :

"Call to-morrow, that my daughter may see you. If you are deserving it is possible we may come to your aid."

All this came of refusing twopence ! It was my first step on the ladder of fortune. A week later I was received into the household of the Rev. Barnabas Dulley, curate of St. Hilary's, Bloomsbury.

CHAPTER II.

MY SENTIMENTAL EDUCATION.

LAUGH, if you like, but for an orange-seller to get into a clergyman's family, though in the humblest capacity, is a step upwards. "Clergyman" or "nobleman" is magic music in English ears. Rank or respectability is what you want, to start with. You needn't have both, but without one or the other you'll never go far in this country. It has fallen to my lot to see plenty of clerical society since ; I have learnt to look down on anything below a canon, or a rural dean at the least. But once upon a time I could look up to a curate, a perpetual curate, as my poor master, the Rev. Barnabas Dulley, promised to be.

He had one son, one daughter, a cook, a girl to do the work—that was myself—and a wife, who, although she had been two years buried, ruled the establishment. Don't you believe in ghosts ? Mrs. Dulley's "walked" that house—the household's ghostly enemy. She had been a Beccles. I learnt that before I had been ten minutes in the place, which was peopled with photographs of herself and her relations, one of whom was twenty-fourth in direct descent from an early Plantagenet king. "What would Matilda have said ?" was the test question my master put to himself before he dared pull on his boots or peel the potato on his plate. In ten days' time I felt that I knew her as well as if she had been my mistress in the flesh, as she was in the spirit, for I was under her just like the rest.

The craze of her life—a malady she had bequeathed to her family, in an acute form—was to keep up "appearances" on £300 a year. They only succeeded in making themselves thoroughly uncomfortable. In a large, rat-ridden house in Bloomsbury they mouldered away their lives, which was all they could afford to do with them there. But the fag-end of the lease was cheap, and the place was to come down by-and-by, so need not be kept in repair—that was out of the question. It had never been properly scoured and swept till I came to live in the family, but it had three-and-twenty feet frontage. The Beccles coat of arms (a Cock, armed, crested, combed and wattled—ruby ; and a

Bull, statant, regardant, argent, pied sable, collared and chained—or) was emblazoned wherever it could be, at a cost the Dulleys cheerfully stinted themselves in tea and sugar to defray. They would have lived upon air, I believe, if the saving would have enabled them to keep a carriage, though they never drove out in it. The son, Master Tom, was at Oxford College, to his own disgust, and at a frightful expense to his parent. He was making the worst of his time there, his sister sorrowfully said, but those three university years, for better, for worse, were indispensable to the finishing of a gentleman's education. He had been offered a good berth in the tea-trade, but—what would Matilda have said?

The Rev. Barnabas, or son of consolation—never was son so unlike his father as this inconsolable widower—was not so much to be pitied as he looked. Doleful as a mute, to all outside appearance, this left his mind at comparative ease. He set up for being eccentric—that's your genteelst cloak for thrifty habits! He received visitors in his dressing-gown, turned vegetarian by fits and starts, and forbade newspapers through his house. I was in a severe school of gentility, and got lessons in appearances, if I got little else for my services, except a slice of the cook's attic, long family prayers, and rather short than long commons. The cook was fond of whisky, but not of work, and as I did hers without grumbling, which left her free for her favourite pastime, she gave me no trouble, after the first. I could not, of course, associate with such a person, except professionally; it was my young mistress, Miss Alice, who soon became all the world to me, outside my brooms and saucepans. I never let these stand idle, and it may be that to this special industry I owed the special notice taken of me. "Why, Elizabeth, you're a genius!" sighed Miss Alice, when I came to announce I had mended the door-bell, and righted the window-sash, and the Rev. Barnabas pronounced my restoration of the ruins of the drawing-room carpet, "a perfect miracle." But they soon came to take such miracles for granted, till my master would bring me his spectacles to mend, set me to alter the cut of his dress-coat, and seemed vexed, and made me feel ashamed of myself, that I couldn't tune the church harmonium and solder the gas-pipes when they leaked.

Miss Alice was a sweet girl of five-and-twenty, who couldn't walk out of the house without me—a girl ten years her junior—to protect her. Poor Miss Alice! I pity, but have little respect for, a young person who can't learn to walk from Paddington to Mile End by herself without a scare. Sooner than that Miss Alice should set foot in an omnibus, the family would go without fires in a frost. She could never afford to go visiting in the country, because she must travel first class, because her mother was a Beccles. So she got no air, or exercise, but delicate health, bad headaches, and a sad complexion. It made you feel tired to look at her; the

least draught gave her cold, and the exertion of dressing herself knocked her up for the day. Would I be a young lady of poor but distinguished parentage! I required no keeper, and was sent on shop-errands far and near. I thanked heaven for my strong health, and that my mother was not a Beccles; though, to be sure, she was a Dickson; one of the Dicksons of Upper Farm, Brambledon—no connection, if you please, of Dixon the hatter in the town.

Miss Alice was so kind as to take an immense fancy to me, which was fortunate for us both, since I must be her shadow whenever she went out of doors. She sent for me to read to her in the evenings; she began to teach me one thing and another, and before the first year was out, came to treat me more like a sister than a servant. Perhaps it was getting no wages made the difference. "Elizabeth," she said once, pulling up in the midst of a confidential speech, as if to slip in a word of apology to Matilda, who, if she had been listening, would certainly have said something; "I don't know how it is, but you seem to me to talk and think almost like a lady." "Nor I, Miss," I answered humbly, but feeling as proud as a peacock all the same, as I knelt polishing, gently lest they should come off, the broken legs of the sofa upon which she lay; "it must come from living with you!" Yes, and provokingly little was there to be proud of in that. We women can adapt ourselves to anything. Like pencil-writing, easy to rub out and put in the contrary to what stood there before. Your shop-girl will make a better duchess than your shop-boy a duke, any day. And why? There's less to learn, and what there is, is more on the outside. Teaching me amused Miss Alice, who had few amusements handy and that cost nothing, and I made haste to learn all I could, before she tired of giving me lessons. It was funny to find how little I had to add to my own book-learning to overtake her in all that she knew. There was French, to be sure, and music. Of singing she taught me hymn-singing only, which was tantalizing, as she herself sang love-songs in four languages. But Matilda had said all music but sacred music was unbecoming for the lower orders, and there her daughter held firm. In books she soon relaxed. Sunday books we began with, but once at work on the tree of knowledge we quickly got beyond the list of the Christian Knowledge Society, until, for the sake of talking it over with me, she let me read everything she read herself. I needn't tell you that was all poetry and novels. I grew perfectly voracious, and got through an amount of printed matter in the first twelvemonth it amazes me now to remember. What with house-work, head-work and needle-work, my hands and my head were brim full, and it struck me that I, pauper orphan though I was, had a livelier time of it than my young mistress, who had finished her education eight years ago, and had nothing to do ever since.

"Dear Miss Alice," I ventured one morning, as she sat with her novel in her lap, gazing out of the window I was cleaning at the peril of my neck, for that room was none so cheerful but you wanted to see out of it; "are you not moped to death? In your place I should be."

"Why, Elizabeth?" she listlessly inquired.

"You get out so little," I explained; "you don't seem to care for housekeeping. All work and no play is bad, I know; and all play and no work may be worse; but no work and no play seems to me something not to be borne. Like a princess in captivity!" I concluded thoughtfully, scrubbing the glass pane as energetically as its crazy condition permitted.

"There's only one thing, Elizabeth," she returned, musing, "that is paramount in a woman's life, and that makes or mars her happiness."

"And that is love," I put in on the spot, in a hurry to show I hadn't read all those novels for nothing. I sighed. I had finished my job and went pensively about my business of dishing up the lunch, thinking aloud, in the words of the particular novel finished yesterday, "In the dawn of that superb new world, what would not be swallowed up and forgotten?"

What indeed? A sensible girl would have shaken her head, you say, and taken warning by the reflection that the mere thinking about it had made Miss Alice so careless of everything around her all these years, that she had never lifted a finger to mend what was amiss. But what girl ever yet took anything but example by another? As during the second year we grew more intimate, and I read fresh bushels of novels, I fell entirely into my poor dear Miss Alice's way of feeling and thinking.

She was trying to fancy her life into a three-volume novel, and it wouldn't take the mould. Some lives won't. There's stuff in them for a sermon, or a school book, but not for a romance. Miss Alice's might point a moral, but we wanted it to adorn a tale. In my poetical fits I compared her to the Sleeping Beauty. But she was merely nice-looking, and the years were getting on. At first I used to think, "If anything should happen to her papa before the fairy prince comes to wake her, what is there but the charity of friends between my young lady and the workhouse? He must be rich, too, who's to marry Miss Alice. No poor man in his senses would make her his wife." She couldn't put her hand to anything useful—menial she called it—and in all that concerned the management of the house was no better than a baby.

But there's no room in your head for these petty considerations when you sing love-songs all the morning, read novels all the afternoon, and talk them over with some one else all the evening, like Miss Alice; no room for anything but your Ideal—somebody whose path and hers were bound to cross somehow, sometime. I too had learnt to look upon his coming as safe and sure. We

believed in him as firmly as in the Day of Judgment. He was the other certainty. Meantime the ideal himself had changed pretty often, but the novels, I maintain, not we, were to blame for that.

My young lady treasured in her head, so to speak, a chamber of heroes, heroes of romance, with whom, as fast as I made acquaintance, I fell in love; and to this day our prime favourites stand out clearly before me. I look and I laugh, yet I think that I love them still.

There was Guy of Redclyffe, who won my first and best affections, as he had won hers at sixteen. A saint out of legend and a baronet out of Burke rolled into one. The quaintest mixture in nature or out of fairyland. An Abel with a dash of Cain promising to break out every now and again. The hero with tremendous passions, theoretically, and a squeamish conscience when it comes to practice; a creature you *couldn't* but adore, you know, if you could only chance to come across him.

Perhaps she despaired of that, for he had been shelved for years, and his place taken by one, two, and three. Foremost was Rochester — Jane Eyre's Rochester — bad, but reclaimable, with real virtues and real vices on a royal scale. Attractive in a book, like a lion in a cage, but, for my part, I had rather *not* come across him.

He too had had his day, and been superseded by one after another. I remember a manly amorous giant, with red hair, and no brains to speak of; a hero of whose virtues not much can reasonably be expected, but whose gladiatorial form, delicious and debonair, takes your heart by storm, if only to break it at the end of the third volume, by his wicked ways, or at best by some stupid blunder.

But his star was setting already, and his place, with Miss Alice, in a fair way to be filled by his opposite, known nowadays as the Daniel Deronda pattern, irreproachable in morals and manners, the hero who goes like a clock; a bit of a prig, granted, but you can't have everything; and of many drawbacks, say I, choose the least; so I sincerely agreed with Miss Alice in her choice, in her leaning to white magic rather than black. Right or wrong, it was no matter, since none of these magicians ever came in our way. We saw little company, in general, few men in particular, and heroes are not as common as grass. I grew downright jealous, for Miss Alice, of those girls in the story-books. The luck they have! If one of them goes for a country walk, sure as fate the hero-horseman comes clattering along by-and-by, and down comes the horse on the very spot where Miss can run to the rider's assistance. Let her go talking or reciting to herself in the garden, the lover, that is to be, is safe to be loitering behind the wall, and is smitten at once. Send her for a twilight stroll in the unlikeliest quarters, romance in the form of a great, beautiful, fair dragoon is in ambush to waylay her. The contrast with the state of

things at home was provoking to a saint. The only person under that roof who had ever had a romance in her life was the cook, whose first sweetheart had shot at the second from behind a hedge. For Miss Alice I saw not the slightest opportunity. Her means would not enable her to dress up to the level of fashionable society, and if ever the question arose of mixing in homelier circles, it was self-evident that Matilda would have said No.

Conceive then, if you can, my surprise, my stupor, one day by mere chance to discover that she and her destiny had met at last. She had seen the being of her dreams, had Miss Alice, and become the object of his impassioned secret addresses. The only man on earth she ever could adore, in crossing her path, had planted his image there for ever. He was the supreme fact of her existence. Henceforward she lived upon the gorgeous madness of hope, which the sight of him might at any time convert into superb insanity of joy! Some bar—what, I puzzled to conjecture—existed to their union. This it was which had made her more dreamy of late, sing more love-songs than ever, read more sentimental novels, and neglect her poor humble friend, Elizabeth Adams.

Now I never read her letters. Few domestics can say as much for themselves. But correspondence left open on a desk you have to dust seems put there expressly to catch your eye. What caught mine was the beginning—"My only Love!" then some half-sentences as poetical as any ever set down in a novel. Finally the signature—Julius Hetherington.

It was enough. Julius Hetherington! I never asked myself to which type of heroes he belonged. I saw him distinctly, in the shape of the last of them that had bewitched our fancy; his figure faultless in its build, his features almost Greek in their perfection, his brow intrepid though calm, his dark yet luminous look, and reductive expression of grave authority. In spite of his proud, careless, slightly supercilious grace, you could see at a glance he was armed with volcanic passions, severely curbed. When he spoke you must listen as though the spheres were singing; his look pierced you through like a sword, and in his presence you withered up, shrank, and trembled like a fawn under the eye of a serpent.

How and when she first made the serpent's acquaintance I must wonder and wonder till she chose to let me know. But I felt as excited about it as though the good luck were my own, as sorry for the lovers' enforced separation.

Oh for a scrap of the luck of a story-book heroine! But when Miss Alice and I got caught in a crowd, if any one came to our rescue it was not Julius Hetherington but the police. She might recite verses in the back garden from morning till night; she would only put out her papa, writing his sermon. Another tell-tale scrap of paper, however, left exposed as before—this time it was *her* letter, just begun—told me they two had met again. Ten

delirious minutes, compared to which all the rest of her life was absolutely waste and worthless. She walked in a superb new world whose effulgence blotted out the sun. Away from him the colour was gone out of the sunsets, the music out of the birds. He was the die on which her universe turned.

Guess if I stared. Later I had a glimpse of his answer, not a whit less impassioned—"Meet you? Why, Love, I would go to meet you in a charnel, a prison, in death's dungeon itself." And, "Love like ours is a sun to which the poor material orb is but a dull distant star. Our whole world would be made dark by its extinction. What can life hold more for us than the certainty that your heart and mine can beat with no other love, no more than the aloe can know a second blossoming!"

All this romance going on, and not a word about it to me! And she had freely promised to tell me whenever the shadow of love should pass between herself and another! I was desperately hurt by this want of confidence, a slight I had done nothing to deserve.

The next thing was that I began to grow jealous of Miss Alice, and to wish my mother had been a Becces. What a miserable prospect was before me, should I ever have a suitor of my own—some clown, or dry-goods clerk at the best—who, supposing he could write me anything of a love-letter, would be totally incapable of so beautifully refined a style. I grew discontented with my condition, thought less about my work, and more of novels, plays, and poetry—I had lots of Shakespeare by heart—and took to reciting my pet passages by night in the attic, when the cook was snoring in her sleep, which there was fortunately no breaking. Juliet in love, Ophelia gone crazy, Lady Macbeth inciting to murder—I was all of them by turns. If I couldn't go so far as to fancy myself a real heroine, I might make believe to be an imaginary one.

This Christmas Master Tom came home as usual from the University, where he had just been "plucked." His failure had not lowered his always boisterous spirits. He only wanted to have done with college, which he hated, for there was nothing to do there, he declared, out of the cricketing season. Plucked or feathered, his family had counted on his turning out a finished gentleman. A very unfinished gentleman he had always appeared to me, when he was at home, which was never when he could help it. My readings with Miss Alice had made me fastidious. This year the want of polish struck me particularly. He had such explosive manners, and a dictionary that strangely resembled that of Tim, the match-boy. There was no harm in the lad, nor anything else, worth the mention. He refused to dress for dinner, smoked in the drawing-room, and never thought of what Matilda would have said. "My mother spoilt him," sighed Miss Alice. "I believe you, miss," I rejoined, tartly, for he never seemed

to know what a door-mat or scraper was made for, and in sawing his bread cut holes right and left in the tablecloth, whilst nobody said a word.

Suddenly, not long after the vacation began, if this big booby didn't begin to look sentimental, to sigh, and grow graver and moodier every hour. Fresh from my last lessons, I jumped easily to the natural conclusion that he too had fallen in love with somebody. But what thunderstruck me was the discovery he presently took pains to make clear to me, that the somebody was Elizabeth Adams!

I soon got over my surprise. Where, after all, was the wonder? Kings have married beggars before now, if ballads are to be trusted. I could not make Tom Dulley kinglike, by any stretch of imagination; still it *was* condescension, in one whose mother had been a Beccles.

Up till then I had judged my young master very severely. He gave vastly more trouble, I thought, than he was worth, and, as his sister put it, he had "no conversation." But his plain hints of serious addresses flattered me into a more complimentary opinion. With the blinds down and the light behind him he might pass for a rough attempt at the young lion-cub hero type—being heavy and broad-shouldered, and lazy and muscular. It was not the style of all others I preferred, the big booby style; still I could hardly expect a Julius Hetherington to come courting me; and Tom Dulley was a University man, and his mother had been a Beccles—there! the gentility fever raging in the house had got into my head. I knew nothing against him; he had always been most civil and respectful to me, I took care of that, and as the victim of a hopeless passion for myself he became almost interesting. Of course I should have to plant a dagger in his heart by refusing him when he proposed, but our novel heroines invariably began by rejecting two or three of their suitors, and the idea of being the supreme fact of the world to anybody, the die on which his universe turned, and for whose sake he should live single for years or for ever, was not displeasing to dwell on, especially for a poor girl like me.

My first love-letter! It was awkwardly and unromantically conveyed to me in his right boot, where I found it one evening outside his door. I longed for the moment when I should be alone to read it. When at last the cook was asleep I lit a candle and opened the envelope.

But the hand was so bad, it was a task to decipher it, and the spelling—atrocious; yet, that was nothing to the composition itself, which ran as follows:

"Betsy, you're a stunner, by Jove! and lick all the lady-swells I ever saw into fits. I'm dead gone on you, and you know it. If you're game so am I, and let's come along and get married before the world's a week older. No occasion to tip the wink to my gurnor, who'd raise the deuce of a shindy, you bet your life. I'll get a

parson of my acquaintance to marry us without any rumpus, and we'll just cut and run to Australia. Out there in the backwoods there's a chance for a fellow, and you and I'll get along like blazes—see if we don't.

"Yours devotedly,
"THOMAS DULLEY."

"*What would Matilda have said?*"

So long had I lived under her spell, that that was my first thought now.

Spelling, style, sentiment—would a carter have matched it? thought I in dismay! I was cured of nonsense for a while, I promise you, by my first love-letter. I vowed it should be my last from that quarter. I could have cried with mortification, only I couldn't help laughing, and then I had my answer to think of. I set about that on the spot, and found it came of itself; without pumping. I wrote :

"Sir,

"I am far from insensible to the compliment you pay me in wishing to make me your wife. But our union is impossible. The displeasure of your family, which you regard so lightly, would yet have been a dark spot on our felicity which might have poisoned the stream at its source, could I have requited your sentiments. That is out of my power. Since, then, I cannot bid you hope, it is certain I could not wrong you more fatally than by assenting to your offer of your hand.

"Yours respectfully,
"ELIZABETH ADAMS."

Quite a fine piece of writing, I thought, beside his own. Decided too. Poor lad! He might have done worse than marry me. He did, soon after. But that I could hardly have done worse for myself than take him, is certain. Go through life with "my mother-in-law was a Beccles," ringing in my ears? Not for Elizabeth Adams! So I put that note into his left boot, when, first thing the next morning, I placed his Balmorals at his door. The next thing was to go to Miss Alice and give warning. She was greatly distressed, and her father reproached me with ungratitude. "Sir," I reminded him, "I am an orphan of eighteen, with my bread to earn and a little honey on it, if I can. You cannot afford to pay me wages. I wish to leave at once."

When Master Tom heard of my intention he looked as black as thunder, which I fancy gave his father a hint. For the Reverend Barnabas suddenly turned round, decided I was doing wisely, gave me ten shillings and a character, and leave to go to-morrow, if I liked. Master Tom sulked like a spoilt child; but I took no heed of his dudgeon, lest he should think I was beginning to relent. I arranged with a poor widow, who kept a little stationer's shop, that I knew, for board and residence until I should find some employment; a search I was confident would not take many days.

It only remains for me to describe my parting with Miss Alice. We both cried. For in spite of her recent neglect it pained me

to leave her, and she seemed to mind as I never expected she would.

"What shall I do with myself, Elizabeth, when you are gone?" she said plaintively, "alone and with no one to talk to."

"No, no, not alone," I broke in hastily. "Dear, happy Miss Alice, I know all. You have a lover who worships the floor you tread on. You are parted, but the absence of Julius Hetherington must be dearer than the presence of Elizabeth Adams," I concluded enthusiastically, if somewhat obscurely.

"What do you mean?" she asked with faint embarrassment.

I frankly confessed myself, telling how, without prying, I had surprised her romantic secret. She was not angry; she blushed, half laughed, hesitated, then struck me dumb by a strange confession.

Those letters were her own composition, written to herself, by herself, in the name of Julius Hetherington, himself a creation of her brain, and in a disguised hand to facilitate the delusion. She had been, so to speak, her own love correspondent!

Now, this sort of thing might do for Miss Alice, but it struck me it was well for myself I was leaving—and not for a lunatic asylum! A girl who has her way to make must walk on her own feet and not go playing with flying machines. I felt as if I had been dropped from the clouds and half stunned in coming down. "Well, miss," I said thoughtfully, "it's not for me to advise you, but I think in your place I should try and be practical for a bit for a change."

CHAPTER III.

SUCCESS AND HOW I WON IT.

PERHAPS you may think I left that house no better off than when I first entered it. You would be mistaken. Love-lessons apart, had I not put three years' practice in housework of all sorts behind me? Just as all foreign gentlemen have to serve time in the army, so, think I, should all girls pass an apprenticeship in doing what they can in this way, to keep the wolf from the door. In times like the present there is no telling what lady, of whatever degree, who knows how to do her room, cook her dinner, and make her gown, may find these not the least valuable among her accomplishments.

Bent on rising, as ever, on leaving the Dulleys, I next aspired to become a nursery governess. Why not? Worse starters were in the field. If Tom Dulley had had me for his nursery governess he would have known how to spell Australia, I promise you. So I inscribed myself at a registry in the Strand, as a young person, cheerful, musical, fond of children, thoroughly domesticated,

competent to teach the rudiments of education, and accustomed to make herself generally useful. All true to the letter. But I met with no encouragement. Housemaids were brisk, I was told, and cooks lively in the extreme; but nursery governesses drooping and getting duller, a drag in the market, said the agent, facetiously, whenever I went to inquire, twice every day for a week, till my hopes and my half-sovereign were nearing an end.

I continued to go, for I liked the walk; because it took me past the Albatross Theatre, as a child likes the walk by the toy-shop or sweet-shop, though never a penny he may have, to go inside and spend. And I thought of the golden days before father died and our troubles began, when he often got orders from the stage carpenters and used to take mother and me.

The Dulleys thought plays objectionable when acted, though they might be read, even aloud. And had we not read them, Miss Alice and I, by dozens?—and all the best parts I had acted over and over again in my head, as I've told you.

So I never passed the Albatross without stopping for a good look at the advertisements, which announced,

"Every Evening
MISS ANNIE TORRENS,
as
Gertrude
in
'THE LITTLE TREASURE.'"

till one afternoon, a file of sandwich-men on parade there, gave notice of a change of programme:

"Production of 'CLEOPATRA'
To-morrow.
With elaborate new scenery, dresses, and effects."

As usual I stared my eyes out at the colonnade, then sighed and passed on my way along a side street. Just then a lady stepped from a side-door, walking in my direction. Her bright silk attire was never designed with a view to not attracting attention, and there seemed no rudeness in looking at her well. She was sweetly pretty, with a furze-bush of auburn hair where her forehead should be. Her face, half of it like a bird—the upper half—kitten-like below, struck me as something I was not admiring for the first time. She came hurriedly, excitedly along, and heedlessly ran up against me. So black she looked that I begged her pardon instead of returning her frown. This died on her brow and my apology on my lips, as we stood facing each other—not for the first time.

"Lizzie!" she exclaimed doubtfully.

"Why, Annie, it's never you!" I uttered in breathless amazement.

She and I had been girls together at the Brambledon village

school. Annie was my elder by five years, and at school she was nicknamed the Silver Spoon, because she always carried off the good-conduct prizes from girls who deserved them better; and directly she left, got engaged to a thriving grocer, named Tomkins, the only good match in Brambledon.

I had lost sight of her since. But I concluded that sugar and tea must be brisk, for she was dressed in the pink of fashion. Still, though young, I was too discreet to ask questions. I only said, with the sincere delight you feel at meeting an old friend again, or even an old enemy:

"How glad I am to see you looking so well, Mrs. Tomkins!"

"Hush!" she replied, mysteriously. "I am Miss Torrens now."

"Mrs.—Miss—how's that?" I stammered ingenuously, having always understood that was a step in life impossible to retrace.

"When my poor Tomkins'—" (What, Tomkins dead already, and Annie a widow?)—"business failed, two years after we married, I accepted an offer from a country manager to appear on the stage. Some of the Tomkins family, who are rather particular, objected to their name appearing in public advertisements, so I took that of Torrens instead."

"What!" I cried, awestruck, "then you are 'Gertrude,' the famous Miss Torrens whose name is in everybody's mouth!" I felt sure it must be, from seeing it printed so big. "Oh, Annie, Annie, the silver spoon again!"

She smiled, and took my arm familiarly, a piece of condescension that won my whole heart.

"Lizzie dear," she said confidentially, "good fortune will never make me forgetful of my old friends. So you think me enviable, do you?" and she tossed her little head. "Lizzie, whatever you do, never go on the stage. The more you succeed, the more you have to suffer. I have just come from rehearsal, and could cry. My brilliant position is threatened, my professional career checked; all through the spiteful tricks of a jealous rival, who won't have a hand lifted in the house except in applause of herself."

The distress in her tone went to my heart, and roused my deep indignation.

"What a snake in female form!" I exclaimed. "Dear Annie, tell me what mischief she has done."

"Slater—our manager—refuses to let me wear the costume I had made expressly for a scene in the new play, 'Cleopatra.' He says it's of another period; but that's merely an excuse. This woman is at the bottom of it. She knows that as Cleopatra's maid of honour, Iras, I shall outshine her as Cleopatra. Slater is her tool—and this is her revenge."

"How base!" I said. "But couldn't you alter it so as to leave no room for the manager's objections, at least?"

"Too late," returned Annie, with a real tragedy ring in her tone. "It's wanted for to-morrow. Some one would have to take it to

pieces and put it together entirely different from top to toe. 'Two days' work, at the least. I can't, and the stage dress-makers won't. That woman has them all under her thumb!"

"Oh, the creature!" I responded sympathetically. "Can no one help you, Annie? I'd sit up all night, with pleasure, to do it for you if I could."

"You, Lizzie!" she said dubiously. "Is that your line of business, then?"

"Well, not professionally," I confessed; "but these last three years I have been . . . companion . . . to a clergyman's daughter, and accustomed to put my hand to most things. You know I never beat you but in one thing in the old days, Annie, and that was at dressing the dolls. Where there's a will, there's a way. I'd work my fingers off to help you, if help you I could. As for that woman, your enemy, I feel that I hate her."

"How kind of you, Lizzie, to feel so," said Annie, drawing my arm closer within hers, and her brown eyes sparkled. "I'm afraid it's no use. But you shall step home with me, and see the costume; and I'll tell you all about myself since we parted."

"Annie, you're an angel!" I returned; feeling already as if paid in advance for any prospective exertions, by this promise of a glimpse into the world she belonged to. I was so proud to be seen walking arm-in-arm with a celebrated actress, that I felt sorry I had no London acquaintance, except the Dulleys, who were not of the right sort to appreciate the honour.

Tomkins, it appeared, was not dead after all. When after his failure he ran off to America, his wife, with resolution, declined to accompany him. To follow the fortunes—or as she shrewdly surmised, the misfortunes—of one who, she asserted, had dragged her into penury (her parents were both in a model almshouse) was what only a brute could demand. The sequel had justified her prognostications. Tomkins had failed for the second time in New York, and since then had had the proper feeling to drop written entreaties to Annie to relent, and come out and join him. She was doing uncommonly well on her own account—and, by her own account, rising high in her profession. She had no wish, she said magnanimously, to cast off her poor Tomkins entirely. He was a poor creature, but more to be pitied than blamed for his bankruptcy; and the allowance he made her, though it barely kept her in silk stockings, was, perhaps, as much as he could at present afford.

She lived in a crescent, not far from the theatre, and walked me straight up into her sitting-room. It was like the theatre placard over again, with illustrations. The walls seemed papered with portraits of Annie Torrens, in favourite parts, favourite dresses, and favourite attitudes; the table was strewn with flattering newspaper-cuttings, complimentary letters, and so forth. On the sofa lay somebody or something, covered with a sheet. It was

Iras' costume. She uncovered it, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Lizzie, Lizzie, isn't it a sin and a shame that they won't let me wear it? and all, *all* because Cleopatra lived too long ago!"

"It is, indeed, Annie darling," I rejoined, carefully turning over the ought-to-be old Egyptian garment, whose fashion, as even I could perceive, was too much like that of a Maid of Honour of to-day.

"In the good old times they wouldn't have minded. Didn't Mrs. Siddons act Lady Macbeth in a powdered wig, and usen't Juliet to be played in the latest fashion of the season? For my part I call that the most sensible plan."

"Yes, but they're so particular now," I said soothingly. "I see now what it ought not to be, Annie—Can you tell me what it ought?"

Annie exhibited a coloured design.

"I had it copied from a wrong one," she explained. "That was 'Roman' too, and I thought it would be all the same. But Slater says mine was two thousand years later. You couldn't make it look like this, I suppose?" she said wistfully, insinuatingly, reminding me for all the world of the Rev. Barnabas, when he came to ask if I couldn't do this or do that.

"Annie," said I, "I feel as if I could remove mountains, if that was all, just to disappoint that wicked woman, your rival—what is her name?"

"Charlotte Hope," replied Annie. "She's a perfect scarecrow, and would like to poison every pretty woman. Harsh features, complexion the colour of a guinea——"

"If we could make her out-yellow the guinea," I suggested. "Oh, Annie, I burn to try. Do let me."

"Well, if you spoil it I can't be worse off than now; so try you shall. Take off your bonnet. You'll find the work-things in that drawer. As for me, I feel quite upset, and shall go and lie down, or I sha'n't be fit to appear to-night."

And she left me alone, with her robes and my reflections.

I had just twenty-four hours before me in which to succeed or to fail in the puzzle—how to turn a tight-fitting mediæval costume into loose-flowing classical drapery. I thought of the princess in the fairy-tale—set down to the impossible tasks of disentangling bales of thread and sorting a world of feathers. No fairy prince would come to help me through with the work I had voluntarily undertaken. One moment I repented my audacity.

But whilst I sat, and snipped, and stretched, and pinned, and pulled, and patted, and joined, and pieced, as if the world depended on it, an idea was taking possession of my head, that had been vaguely besieging it from the first moments after my recognition of my school-mate. Why should not I, too, go on the stage? Of course, I should never rise to the top, like Annie, but even she

must have begun at the bottom. The thought seemed by no means so mad as it would have an hour ago.

My fancy took fire; my future seemed to lie hidden in the convolutions of Iras' tunic and peplum. It was do or die. Unless I succeeded I should never have courage to ask of Annie the favour I wanted. She left for the theatre at seven, promising on her way to explain my absence to my landlady at the stationer's. She came home at twelve and went straight to bed. I sat up all night, and it seemed to me to grow light again in no time. Sleepy? Not I! No more than a girl at her first dance—with the sense that her social success is trembling in the balance.

At nine next morning, Annie, in a bewitching pink and grey dressing-gown, put in so anxious a face that I felt like a doctor who has sat up all night with a patient in a precarious condition.

"Well?" she said, with impatient eagerness.

"Annie," I spoke, "Miss Charlotte Hope may turn all the colours of the rainbow, and welcome. Your dress is saved."

The counterpart of the right picture was there before her.

Had I saved her life, her joy could hardly have been greater. "Lizzie, you're a conjuror!" she said, with tears in her eyes. "Breakfast's ready. You can spare time for a cup of tea now. You'll work all the better for it afterwards."

Though dead tired, I scarcely felt it, for the pride of having my tea poured out for me by a theatrical celebrity. She was in such a heavenly temper, too, as you are only when the weight of a great calamity has suddenly been removed. Now or never, I felt, was my moment to strike.

"I am sorry, Annie," I began, "that you speak so badly of the stage as a profession. More than once I had thought of it for myself; though, of course, I could only aspire to a very humble position. But what must be the miseries of the rank and file if leaders like yourself, dear, find the life intolerable?"

"Oh, it's well enough for the minors," quoth Annie. "Nobody envies them—nobody worries them. It's when you've got to the front that your troubles begin."

"Well," I resumed, "a celebrity there could be no hope—I mean, no fear—of my ever becoming. I should be quite content with a subordinate post. Do you think, dear, there would be any chance for me at the Albatross?"

"I'll mention it to Slater this morning," vouchsafed Annie graciously. "He's wanting some new supers, I know, and might as well take you on as another. But there's no accounting for managers' whims."

So Annie went off to the rehearsal, all smiles, and my spirits ran up prodigiously. Nobody, surely, could refuse her anything—my cause was in safe hands, said I, light-heartedly, as I sewed the embroidered border on her veil.

In an hour she returned, all frowns and impatience. Flinging herself into the arm-chair she exclaimed disgustedly :

"The play is put off till the day after to-morrow, and the rehearsal till to-night. The idea of their forgetting to let me know in time to save me the walk down for nothing !"

"That will give us leisure to put the finishing touch to Iras' dress," I reminded her. "Shall we rehearse that now ?"

I waited till she had it on, arranged to the last fold, and had revelled well in her reflection in the glass. When I saw she was smiling again I inquired timidly :

"And did you remember, Annie, to put in a word for me ?"

"To say the truth, I forgot. But you might go down to the theatre this afternoon all the same. Slater will see you on your presenting my card. You've time enough now."

"Oh, plenty," I replied, pretending to be calm, but her words had put me into such a flutter that, not to spoil my own handiwork, I decided not to touch it again till the interview was over.

My sleepless night would not improve my voice for a trial recitation, and my dress, an old one of Miss Alice's—though she declared it looked much better on me than on herself—was plain and shabby. I went first to my lodging, where, Annie having never delivered my message yesterday, they had made sure I had been run over and taken to the hospital, rested for an hour, and then set off for the theatre. Miss Torrens' card procured my admission at the stage door. I was directed down some steps, and told to wait. The descent brought me on the stage before I knew ; and there I instantly encountered a sharp-featured gentleman, with sand-coloured hair, a colourless face, and a gaze that would have disconcerted a brazen statue. Mr. Shirley Slater, or the Old gentleman, my insight told me. He looked like criticism incarnate : yet, out of his managing department, some said, he was considered rather a dull man. But I did not know that, and trembled like a criminal when he asked me gruffly what I wanted. I saw I had stumbled upon him at an unlucky moment, but I managed to articulate that Miss Torrens had asked him to see me, and for what.

He seemed bothered, and as he scanned me from head to foot I saw "novice," "awkward squad," in every motion of his eyelid. Desperation gave me nerve :

"Sir," I said, "I am desirous of adopting the stage as a profession. I have studied——"

He cut me short.

"Let me hear your voice. Can you recite something ?"

His purpose, I feared, was to get rid of me, by telling me I should never do. I still hoped to surprise him, and out of a string of dramatic extracts that occurred to me, chose the strongest :

"The Lament of Queen Elizabeth, in 'Richard the Third,' upon the death of her husband," I said, collecting myself. You

know the place—where the queen enters distractedly, attended by Lords Rivers and Dorset. Somewhat timidly I began :

“ Ah, who shall hinder me to wail and weep,
To chide my fortune and torment myself ?
I'll join with black despair against my soul
And to myself become mine enemy.”

“ Louder,” he said peremptorily. Obedient, I resumed, in a raised voice :

“ Edward, my lord, thy son, our king, is dead,
Why grow the branches when the root is gone ?
Why wither not the leaves that lose their sap ? ”

“ Louder, louder,” he insisted. It seemed to me I was shouting like the town crier. I proceeded at the very top of my voice :

“ If you will live, lament, if die, be brief,
That our swift-winged souls may catch the king,
And, like obedient subjects, follow him
To his new kingdom of perpetual rest.”

Rapt as I was, I noticed, as I spoke on, that he seemed struck, and was considering me now with most serious attention. Elated to the skies, I let myself go, and concluded with a burst of passion that astonished myself :

“ Give me no help in lamentation,
I am not barren to bring forth laments,
All springs reduce their currents to my eyes,
That I, being governed by the watery moon,
May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world.
Ah ! for my husband ! my dear lord Edward ! ”

He was regarding me with frank interest, and intently. In an agony of suspense, but self-pleased at heart, I waited for what he was going to say.

What he said was this, gravely :

“ *Can you make a batter pudding ?* ”

“ Rather,” I replied, not to be put out by a joke, as of course it was. “ Try me.”

He continued seriously, as before. “ Miss Fitzwilliam, who was cast for Lady Maude, in the new play, has thrown up her engagement. We are going to take her at her word. It's only a walking part, and with two rehearsals, I think we could pull you through.”

It was the proudest moment of my life. I, Elizabeth Adams, had made a powerful impression, at a first hearing, upon this experienced judge. I might have the making of a Miss Torrens, if not of a Mrs. Siddons, in me. I answered modestly that I would do my best, and trusted to justify his expectations. The batter pudding puzzled me still. Theatrical slang, no doubt ; that Annie would translate for me. I begged for my part to study. He laughed, and told me Lady Maude's part had been cut out ; but

she was to be left in, and the batter pudding was indispensable. Miss Torrens had the play-book, and would show me. I must study the scenes and attend the rehearsal to-night. Then if he found I could manage, he would settle affairs.

I thanked him for his kindness and condescension, adding that I had been too nervous whilst reciting just now to do myself justice, but if he should ever think fit to give me the chance, I hoped to show I could do better than that.

"Oh, my dear," he replied jocularly, but in a perfectly matter-of-fact tone, "with such a good appearance as yours, there's no need for you ever to open your mouth. Hold up your head, keep your eyes off the ground, and we'll not let you spoil the whole thing by talking, as you'd be sure to do if we gave you the chance."

It came on me like a clap of thunder, floored me nicely, and it took me all the walk back to recover the shock to my ambition. Never was any one so mortified by a speech intended for a compliment. I saw it all now. My declamation had had nothing to do with his offer. Perhaps he had been laughing in his sleeve at my earnestness. But just because I had a nice colour, and a tall, well-grown figure, and a fair-haired young head at the top of it, I was to have a trial. How I wished I had been plain and insignificant, to have been judged on my own merits!

I found Annie so busy with her bangles and sandal shoes, that I had to remind her of the errand on which I had gone.

"Well, what did he think of you?" she inquired indifferently.

"Not much," I sighed, and related what had passed, but omitting all mention of Slater's parting compliment, lest she should fancy I was vain of it.

She assured me that it was a grand thing to get taken on at once, in whatever capacity. Indeed, it was an extraordinary piece of luck, which she was quite at a loss to account for.

"He must have been terribly hard up," she mused aloud.

"That was it, no doubt," I rejoined, glad to show her I was not elated.

"And that Fitzwilliam girl leads him such a life! He was paid to engage her, he'd pay now to be quit of her, I know. Be as awkward, as ill-bred, as possible, Lizzie, you can't be very much worse."

This was real consolation. I set to work on the play-book at once, and plucked up courage for my coming *débüt*.

CHAPTER IV.

CLEOPATRA.

THE play "*Cleopatra*"—not Shakespeare's, as silly I had imagined—was a modern society comedy in three acts, written by a "dis-

tinguished amateur"—"distinguished in what, no one knows," said Annie. His name was Francis Gifford; it was his third play, the other two had both been dead failures, a lot of money had been spent upon bringing out this last, and the liveliest fears were entertained of its success.

I looked it through and through till I knew it by heart. A very old story, with a new hat and cloak. The story of the battle-royal between a star actress, with all the talents, and an earl's daughter, with all the virtues, for the volatile affections of a very middling specimen of the deceiver, man—much too much honoured, you would suppose, by such a scrimmage on his account, and between two such rare charmers as Cora the stage-queen, a beautiful serpent of deadly, irresistible fascinations, and his bride-elect, Blanche, a queen of society, and an angel, all but the wings.

Act I. Courtship.—Here Innocence, the Lady Blanche, had her lover, Purefoy St. John, well in hand, but the trail of the Serpent was about their path of roses, you could see, and a glimpse of the Serpent herself left you feeling decidedly uncomfortable about the Dove.

Act II. Marriage.—The Serpent, confronted with the Dove in her earthly paradise, tries treacherously to sting her.

Act III.—but I shall not anticipate. And it was no concern of mine. For I made sure that as Lady Maude, Blanche's hoyden sister, I had literally nothing to do but to wear a fashionable dress, which embarrasses no girl with truly feminine instincts, and in making the batter-pudding to form a background for Annie, whilst she cooked a chop, and Lady Jane, sister number three, peeled the potatoes. This was in a cottage-scene that closed the first act.

My first rehearsal! I was in such a tremble, as if I were going to be shot. My reception by the Albatross company was not reassuring. Chance had pitchforked me into the play; but if I bungled, or tripped, or offended anybody, I should be shot out as rubbish, for sure, without remorse. Who, pray, was Elizabeth Adams, that she should be considered?

Slater first took me over the stage, gave me minute directions, and asked if I thought I could remember. Remember! I felt as if dear life hung on my knowing my right hand from my left, the first, second, and third entrances apart. Then he put me through the scenes—it was like putting the pieces of a puzzle together—and said it was right enough.

He was furious because Miss Hope stayed away. There was a scene—the final scene—in which I was on the stage with her, and in which, if I put her out by the breadth of a hair, the consequences would clearly be disastrous. He read Cora's part himself. Neither the author nor the leading actor—Mr. Edwin Davenant—thought fit to attend, and those who did were out of humour

and careful to show it, stalking through their parts, as under protest at an extra rehearsal for the sake of myself and another new super. However, things went smoothly, and when all was over I signed an agreement to "play" Lady Maude at a salary of a pound a week, until further notice.

"There now, Lizzie, you're launched," said Annie, as we left together. "See what it is to have some one to say a good word for you."

"It's all your doing, I know," I replied gratefully, forgetting, in the flush of pleasure, that she had never lifted her little finger in the matter. "How can I ever repay you?"

"Well, you can do me a favour and advantage yourself as well," she answered, and went on to relate how, last week, she had discovered that her lady-housekeeper had been robbing her. They parted on the spot. She now proposed I should lodge with her, sharing expenses and helping her to keep house, until she could suit herself better.

I jumped at the offer—delighted. Early next day I bade an eternal farewell to my humble hosts at the stationer's, and came to establish myself under her roof, with but one thought in my head—"What can I do to prove my gratitude?" Write her letters, run her errands, do up her dresses, make her tea, wash up her tea-things, iron her lace, rub up her jewellery—she soon let me know. Delighted to find a lady-help, who would *not* be more fitly called a lady-hindrance, she found so much of the "general utility" business for me at home, that I barely managed to get to the theatre in proper time, that all-important First Night.

On arriving I was told that Miss Hope wanted to speak to me, and I must go to her dressing-room at once. Following correctly, as I thought, the directions given, I reached a door and knocked. A deep masculine voice answered—"Come in."

To my discomfiture I walked in upon three gentlemen, smoking round a table. Vainly I looked from the faces of the loungers for the leading lady I came to seek.

"I beg pardon, sir," I began, to the face which assumed the most wrathful expression at my intrusion, "I was told I should find Miss Hope here."

Suppressed laughter broke from the other two. The countenance I was accosting now took a really formidable aspect. The table still half screened the person of its owner, whose chair now was angrily pushed back, cigarette dashed down, and I saw what an awful blunder I had made. It was Miss Hope herself. Her short, crisp, dark hair, strongly-cast features, thin but muscular build, the loose jacket she wore over a black vest, had occasioned a mistake which was more my misfortune than my fault. She looked to me, even now, like three men rolled into one, and made the gentleman on her right, though tall, black-haired, and moustached, seem a boy-doll by her side: "Well, Elizabeth

Adams, you've done for yourself now," I thought in despair; "gone and insulted the tyrant of the theatre." I could have run, but that would have mended nothing.

The lady rose. She was tall, and I thought her gigantic. She was ugly, said Annie, and I can answer for it that appallingly so she appeared to me at that moment.

"Who are you?" she demanded, in a tempestuous voice.

"Nobody," I foolishly replied. "I—I am cast for Lady Maude in the new piece."

"Oh, Torrens' *protégée*," she said, in a tone of such disgust as made you feel ashamed of your existence, and forthwith resumed her seat, her cigarette, and her conversation with her friends.

"Torrens' *protégée*" was clearly no password to favour in here. All three, except for a critical derisive glance now and then, ignored me utterly. I must stay there, like a pigeon, to be shot at. What could I do? Look sheepish, or saucy, or glum? All bad. What I did, in self-defence, was to cram into those interminable minutes as many criticisms as they would hold, upon my tormentors. "Annie didn't mis-state your plainness, madam," I thought, to Miss Hope, "and I perceive possibilities of fury underneath, which make me understand how the Albatross may tremble at your nod." It was a treat to turn from her to her right-hand neighbour—surely one of Miss Alice's heroes in flesh and blood. With his slim, straight figure, slender features, shining black hair, and slightly foreign appearance, he looked as if some lady-novelist had composed him in a favourable moment, and came as near to your idea of Prince Charming as plain modern fashions permit.

He on her left was less easy to class. Good features, yet not exactly good-looking. An expressive countenance which yet, seen through its gentlemanly mask of arrant contempt, was no book a girl could read off at first sight. The forehead, the well-marked though light-coloured eyebrows, made a prepossessing beginning; the nose confirmed it, but the eyes put you on your guard; the firm-set mouth placed you at a respectful distance, and if you were timid you felt literally inclined to run away from so determined a chin.

They had forgotten me—or pretended it. Well—it was Miss Hope's fair revenge for my stupidity. At last the gentleman I have compared to Prince Charming dropped a word of remonstrance, and her eyes turned on my penitent form.

"What are you waiting for?" she asked.

"Your orders," I replied. "Mr. Slater told me you had some to give. If he was mistaken, please to say so, that I may go."

"There, don't tease the child," said her left hand-neighbour carelessly. "Tell her what you want with her, and let her go."

"Child—there it is!" exclaimed Miss Hope irascibly. "Upon

my word, Gifford, you authors are cool hands. Put a bungling beginner like *that* into a new piece, just before the curtain goes up? I could kill Slater for serving you such a turn!"

"My first two plays were acted by veterans," he answered composedly, "and got hissed all the same. They can't do worse than hiss me to-night."

She rose, and came towards me, throwing her words, like so many stones, in my face.

"You're a raw recruit, that I know."

"Yesterday was my first drill," I returned, trying not to wince, and reflecting that the worst stage fright would be a joke to this.

"With your cottage scene I have nothing to do. Mismanage it with Miss Torrens to your heart's content. Lose your head, and go out at the wrong door. If there is a wrong door, trust a novice to select it."

I did not contradict her, comforted by the recollection that there was only one door to this particular cottage.

"Now we come to the last moments of the last scene. Cora, standing, say, here," stationing herself near the door—"You there. Let me see if you know what you have to do."

Luckily I had my lesson by heart.

"Cora has her hand on the door, when she looks back at Purefoy and makes a forward movement, but is stopped by Blanche, who intercepts her passage. Meantime, Maude has advanced, and Cora's hand, stretched out for support, grasps hers. Cora withdraws it slowly, as she reaches the door—Maude following her up—and passes out."

Under her eye I must go through this bit of pantomime correctly, then, taking her nod for a dismissal, I escaped—as out of a wild animal's den, remarkably encouraged, as you may suppose, for my *débüt*, and thanking the stars that Annie, and not that virago, would be my partner in the cooking-scene—Annie, who would never storm, I felt sure, even if I went wrong. But go wrong I would not.

I put on my finery and came and stood at the wings, trying not to look as I felt, like the jackdaw among the peacocks, with his new feathers on. But were they not all jackdaws too, to begin with? Perhaps my plumage would get to look natural, even to grow, in good time.

"Don't you be fluttered," said Slater patronizingly, as he passed me just before the curtain rose. "You must go into the water, you know, to learn to swim."

And the stage-carpet might as reasonably have been nervous as I—from the moment that Annie, Lady Blanche, tripped on the scene, in a strawberry-and-cream-coloured dress, whose artful simplicity brought down the house and fastened all eyes on the wearer.

"Scored," drawled Slater jocosely, who was standing with the author near where I waited. "That's good for a favourable notice. See the critics taking notes directly."

"I counted on it," Mr. Gifford replied. "Always throw in the latest fashions gratis. It gives a play such a lift, with the ladies."

"Deuced expensive," muttered Slater feelingly.

"Pshaw! *De minimis non curat*, a high-souled director like you. Look to the end, man, to justify the means."

"Aye—if ever you get there. But she can't change more than once in the first act—Stand back, stand back!" This to me, peremptorily, as if some one behind me was going to shoot.

Back I stood, startled, and looked to see what was coming. It was only Prince Charming beckoning us out of the way—Mr. Edwin Davenant, that is, about to present himself before the audience as Purefoy St. John, a part for which he needed little make up, and no disguise.

"By Jove, he wears well!" observed Slater. "Can you look at him and believe he's close upon fifty?"

"Fifty!" I nearly cried out with incredulous surprise.

"He was at school with a father of mine, and looks like my younger brother," returned the author of "Cleopatra." "Oh, you villain! what lover's gag is that of yours? Thou canst not say I wrote it," he fiercely ejaculated, as Mr. Davenant, slightly imperfect in his part, filled the blank with a love-sentence out of another play, fresh in his memory.

"No harm done," quoth Slater provokingly, but to the point. The dialogue between Blanche and Purefoy differed little from a dozen other society love-scenes, except in one important particular—that it came off in the schoolroom, over a plate of toffee, of which the ladies Blanche and Jane had just made themselves a supply.

"Rash, that," Slater sighed with relief, when laughter and applause showed how this touch was approved by the public. "I doubted if they'd swallow your sweet-stuff."

"Last time I gave them moonlight on the river, and that didn't go down," the playwright affirmed. "Toffee is ever so much more natural, they say; I suppose they know why. I never found it myself growing wild."

"Well, it's more original," remarked the manager. "Good heavens!" as Lady Jane's dress caught on a nail, "there go half-a-dozen yards of frilling. Run, Miss Adams, quick, for a needle and be ready to put it to rights when she comes off."

I ran and lost count of the play's progress until the approach of our cooking-scene. From whispers dropped, I learnt that the act was going badly; last scene had fallen flat as a flounder, declared Mr. Slater. The situation, however depressing for the

principals, had its bright side for a trembling super. In a general breakdown her shortcomings would be overlooked.

There was applause at the realism of the labourer's kitchen, real fire and gridiron, crockery, et-cetera. Interest woke when the three sisters came in on their errand of benevolence and kindled to excitement when it transpired that Annie Torrens was going to cook a chop on the stage. I set about my pudding almost composedly, sure that nobody was taking notes of my movements; unless it were Slater at the wings.

I wouldn't make it too well, like a professional, for I was Lady Maude; but to mismanage a thing properly you must know how to manage it first. I tucked up my French cambric sleeves, tied the cottage apron over my dainty dress and set off. Three eggs, six dessert-spoonfuls of flour, milk, sugar, butter, and a pinch of salt. I beat the eggs into the flour, stirred in the milk, mixed the other ingredients carefully and well, then clapped the pudding into the saucepan—in the time appointed. I knew no more. The strange, novel experience, the sight of the house, dazed me outright. I moved in a dream. Only when the act-drop fell amid hearty applause, followed by calls for the leading actors, did my full senses return. I saw approving glances cast at me from various quarters.

"Very well indeed, my dear," said Slater. "You stepped in to the rescue very neatly. I'll be sworn nobody noticed anything was wrong."

"What *was* wrong?" I asked. No one troubled to answer, but from the talk around, I learnt that Annie, over-anxious not to appear over-skilful, had bungled the business and dropped her chop into the fire. Lady Jane, to screen the mishap, had interposed her person, leaving her potatoes unpeeled. Thus had I and my batter pudding innocently and most unconsciously usurped the place of prominence, and the unrehearsed effect proved so good as to pull the scene through.

"I thought it was all over with you," Slater confessed to the author, "but that kitchen-scene was a hit."

"I counted on it," was the reply. "An appeal to the domesticity of the public seldom fails of response. But I thought Annie Torrens dropped my play into the fire, together with that chop."

"All's well that ends well. It was the batter pudding fetched them and did it. To think we nearly cut out Lady Maude altogether! She saved the scene; the scene saved the act; a piece is saved or lost by the first act. Ergo, she saved the piece—ha, ha, ha!"

There was a general laugh, I hoped not ill-natured, at my expense.

"One moment, Mr. Slater, if you please," said a deep voice behind me which I recognized with a pang of dread.

Miss Hope! Was it possible? The rather plain termagant of an hour ago? Not the expression only—the very features seemed altered. Hold a transparency up to the light, the change is no greater. For the next hour she not only looked but was a beautiful woman of sovereign power, as she cast the nets to win back her lost lover, and taunted him with his double-heartedness till she seemed on the brink of recovering her ascendancy. Here was the “charging part” of the piece. Accident brings the rivals face to face at a country-house, where the actress consents to assist in some tableaux, in one of which she personates “Cleopatra.”

“Haven’t I seen something like that situation before?” whispered Slater dubiously.

“I borrowed it from ‘Adrienne Lecouvreur,’” returned the author candidly. “I observe that, however poorly treated, it always tells. But here the rôles are reversed. The fine lady has the sympathies of the audience.”

Already the poor little bride’s fate seems sealed, as she stumbles into the trap laid for her by her merciless rival. But Providence and a third act can do wonders—reveal every one in their true colours, unmask the adventuress, defeat her plots, and leave Blanche happy in the assurance of the disenchanted Purefoy’s unshaken allegiance.

“It’s all right now,” Slater presently remarked to the author, whose face still betrayed not a trace of elation. “Your good health, my boy; ‘Cleopatra’s’ the best play you’ve made yet.”

“Made it?” returned his companion with emphatic irony. “Your cook might as well say she’d made the hare when she’d hashed it. I’d had enough of failing with plays new and original, so I’ve tried to pass off a piece of old patchwork, and by Jove, I’ve succeeded. Good-night!”

“Don’t you stop to the end, for your call?”

“Not I; say whatever you like for me, any nonsense. I give you free leave.”

I saw him wait, though, to see the last of his heroine, Cora, when frustrated, incensed, at bay, her arts exposed, her malignancy defeated—for Purefoy, by frank confession to Blanche of errors past, has paralyzed the siren’s hands—she departs vanquished. Here the force and reality thrown into the scene by Miss Hope snatched my unwary senses away. I shall ever remember the strange look of scorn, reproach, and baffled passion she cast back at her lost lover, the half-breathed utterances, so many pointed shafts aimed at her rival. Stirred, entranced, I believe I was half crying with excitement, and that as Cora clutched hold of me a tear must have dropped on her hand. I grew hot and then cold with shame to feel what a ninny she must think me, if indeed she had noticed it in the whirl. The success of “Cleopatra” was no longer doubtful; the fall of the curtain was followed by cheers

and calls for the author. Mr. Slater advanced and stated that that gentleman was not in the house, but promised to convey to him the kind approval of the audience, whilst begging to thank them in the name of Mr. Francis Gifford.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTHERN LATITUDES.

CHRISTMAS for aye endeared to Britain's homes,
Crowning the fading year with glory;
Soon will our grey Cathedral domes
Ring with thy wondrous story.

In land-locked islands under tropic skies,
Ablaze with bloom of sun-kissed flowers,
Fair shores will hear the anthem rise
From out the deep bush bowers.

Wand'ers near coral reefs where surges break
Or rock the cradled sun in splendour,
Think, will his paler gleams awake
The robins' cadence tender?

We change our clouds for heaven's aerial height,
Red holly for the wattle golden,
Brave Yule arrives in radiant colours dight,
And dawns with love of years enfolden.

C. E. W.

HOW BROWN AWOKE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT.

THEY had all been a week in the jungle without catching a glimpse of a "fur-jacket," and but for the novelty and the high festival for which the occasion formed an excuse, they were beginning to get rather disgusted with their expedition. They thought sadly of what Smith and his party would be saying when they, the Smith party, returned triumphant to their bungalows with, perhaps, three or four tiger-skins, not to speak of other game, while here they had only accounted for a sambur deer and a few wretched antelopes.

While matters were at this stage, Brown, who loved adventure better than sleep, and seemed impervious to tropical suns, shouldered his gun one afternoon while all the rest of the camp were still steeped in after-breakfast oblivion, and hied out through the jungle for a shot at whatever chance might throw in his way. He hoped at least to come across a jungle fowl or two, or perhaps a pea fowl, to replenish their somewhat empty game-bag; and if bigger game did offer—why, he trusted to his luck and his good breech-loader to make the best of the situation.

The spreading foliage overhead with its flickering shade sheltered him from the direct blaze of the sun, which it largely absorbed; and through the cool shadow below he wound over a thick carpet of dead leaves, between clumps of interlacing creepers and trailers, long thorny canes with terrible hook-shaped prickles and dense masses of leafage; and between the huge trunks of sâl, ceesoo, toon, and other trees, which here, for hundreds of miles east and west, initialed the slopes of the mighty Himalays. Not a breath of air stirred, enough even to agitate the smoke of his cheroot as it curled straight upwards; nor did a sound break the intense stillness of the forest depths. Here it seemed as if the foot of man had never intruded to disturb Nature's primeval garb, or ever essayed the task of cutting down and transferring to the distant haunts of men these huge trunks. All seemed in its wild and natural luxuriance as from time immemorial. Every now and again rare creepers all ablaze with flowers that had wound themselves in thick leafy masses round the trunks of trees arrested Brown's attention, or parasite orchids of brilliant hues that embedded their roots in them. Brown was a keen admirer of nature, and alone as he was communing with her, he felt the quiet, deep spirit of forest life stealing over him—that strange indescribable feeling which Cooper

and Mayne Reid have so well described as wedding the great prairie hunters of the West to their woodland life. Now and again a rustle among the branches caused Brown to look up, and a brilliant jungle-fowl in all his glorious plumage flashed across the sunlight, but too quick for him to take aim. Still, by gauging their flight through the supervening foliage he managed by-and-by to drop one or two. Nothing of a larger kind offered, however, and he was bethinking himself of returning to camp, from which he must now have strolled a considerable distance, when a slight rustle among the undergrowth suddenly arrested his attention. It was nothing but an antelope that trotted out and cantered slowly away as if quite unused as yet to that novel creature, man, that had invaded its solitude. A ruthless bullet, however, soon undeceived and rolled it over, but for a moment only, for up it started again and limped away at a feeble, laboured pace. Brown gave chase, thinking it would soon drop, but still it kept its distance, till, managing to reload as he ran, a charge of No. 2 brought it down.

He had now got his antelope, but what was his consternation on looking round, to find that not only was the sun by this time very low down, but that he had lost his bearings! Another half-hour or so in the Tropics would bring total darkness, and here he was in the midst of the jungle, he knew not whither or how far from camp. He only hoped he was not too far for the reports of his friends' barrels to reach him and direct him towards them, or *vice versâ*. Without such a guide the more he attempted to reach camp, the more he might be wandering away from it. Acting on this idea, he fired off shot after shot, listening intently in the intervals for the wished-for response, but not a sound replied to his signals. Things were beginning to look serious. The dusk was already deepening into darkness, the mosquitoes beginning to buzz, and fireflies to glance through the foliage. There was no chance now of his friends coming out in search of him, on a wild-goose chase at the best, and that, too, in the lawful prowling hour of the four-footed denizens of the forest. Though not one of them might be visible by day, yet Brown knew well that there might be plenty of them in every direction at night, and therefore for him to attempt a solitary journey to camp would be still more dangerous. So there seemed nothing left but to bivouac where he was for the night and make the most of the situation. Accordingly he set about his preparations without more delay.

First he looked about for a tree that would afford a safe and comfortable perch. This he soon found in one where several large arms branched off from the main trunk at an elevation of about fifteen feet from the ground, and which promised a comfortable roost at the fork or point of juncture. Before ascending, however, he was resolved not to leave behind his birds and antelope as a tasty morsel to any stray tiger or leopard that came prowling

about, so he tied one cord to the birds and another to the antelope and the other end of each to his button-hole, and thus accoutred began to ascend the tree. This he managed slowly and with some difficulty, owing to the darkness and smoothness of the trunk, and to his attention being every now and then distracted by imaginary rustling below, but with the help of his hunting-knife and sundry excrescences on the bark, at length he stood upon the branches with a triumphant feeling of being, in a manner, secure and housed for the night. He only hoped some gliding boa might not come upon him unawares and entwine him in its gentle embrace! But beyond that it would puzzle, thought he, even the feline powers of the leopard to reach him in his aerial bedchamber. He now pulled up his birds, and hitching the other cord over a branch of the tree, he soon had his antelope also landed beside him. Nothing remained now but to load and put within easy reach his double-barrelled friend, and to attach himself to the tree as a necessary precaution against sleep. Having done all this he lit his cheroot. Soon the red glow and the soothing fumes helped to dissipate the last trace of vexation at his position, and to throw him into dreamy philosophizings which seem the precursor to sleep. The forest sounds which night had awakened far and near now fell upon his ear, as if the authors were abundant all around, despite their quietude by day. He recognized the deep-throated roar of the king of the forest, the shallower half-snarl, half-howl of the leopard, and the bark of the wolf. An interlude occasionally broke in upon these in the trumpeting of an elephant or the grunt of a rhinoceros—those huge and harmless animals gradually becoming extinct through the wanton assaults of man. At times some of the roarings came very near indeed, and more than once Brown thought he could detect a cat-like movement over the leafy carpet below, but this gave him little concern. Gradually the sounds grew fainter and fainter and further off, till they ceased altogether. Brown was asleep!

How long he had slept he knew not, when a strange, undefinable impression of something wrong caused him suddenly to open his eyes and stare straight before him. There, shining through the foliage and seemingly close to him, appeared two stars of intense brilliancy and richness, the only gleams amid the pitchy darkness. He could not remove his eyes from them but kept staring as if magnetized. Presently he thought there was a slight swaying or slow movement of the stars, and hardly feeling as if he were yet awake, and with the impression of being under some strange fascination, he tried to rouse himself, never moving, however, nor yet once lifting his eyes off those glittering lights. Gradually as reflection grew clearer, the truth dawned upon him with almost overwhelming force! There was no doubt he was under the blaze of a hungry tiger's eyes, the owner of which was apparently gauging his bearings before proceeding to business. The discovery

almost petrified him for a moment, but only for a moment, and then all his coolness returned with redoubled force. Everything depended on his self-possession. His only chance of life, he felt, lay in making himself master of the situation, and this he was resolved to be. Without moving a muscle, without flinching or faltering, steadily he returned the fierce glare that was fixed upon him. In this stare was concentrated the power of the human mind over the brute. He felt this power and knew its efficacy from the experience of many previous occasions. Seconds and minutes passed and still the two continued thus motionless, staring at each other. As each minute passed, Brown felt more and more that this monster that could have torn him to pieces with ease was yet powerless to touch him so long as he kept him under the check of his eye. The least wavering on his part he knew would at once be detected by his terrible *vis-à-vis*, and signal his fate. The idea of seizing his gun had never entered his mind. Before he could half reach for it the animal would have been upon him. By-and-by, as Brown's eyes got accustomed to the darkness, he could discern, crouched on the very branch on which he lay, the outline of the tiger dimly visible only some three yards off. The time that now passed was intensified into a length that seemed interminable to Brown; but still there was no movement of the enemy. At length the glaring eyeballs, he thought, drew nearer to each other, then one gradually was lost to sight, and soon after the other. Then a stealthy cat-like movement and heaving of the strong branch as of some animal retreating along it, till presently a soft plunge and rebound of the branch indicated its having quitted its position. It was not the sound of a leap to the ground, however, but rather of springing from one branch to another, and Brown did not yet feel quite secure, though at the same time thoroughly mystified to account for the movements of his enemy. Not less puzzled was he to understand how the animal could possibly have reached him in a place that seemed inaccessible to a tiger, and where he had thought himself perfectly secure.

Presently he heard a dull thud, announcing that the brute had reached the ground, and Brown at length drew a long breath of relief. He felt that his foe was fairly gone, routed from the field; and this without a single active effort on his part! The tension of those last few minutes left a strain from which it took Brown some time to recover; then his first action, needless to say, was to get in hand his "trusty friend," to be better prepared against any fresh emergency.

Insecure though his quarters were now proved to be, he had no alternative but to continue there for the rest of the night. To descend and attempt to search for others would be the more hazardous of the two, with such neighbours about, and besides an almost impossible task in the darkness. He resolved, therefore,

to keep awake for the rest of the night and a cat's look-out for contingencies. The blood-track of the antelope had, no doubt, he thought, led to his being discovered, though possibly it was more in quest of the antelope than of himself that the tiger had scaled the tree. How he had done so, still remained a puzzle. Brown did not close an eye again that night, which seemed interminable, and took him half a dozen more Havannahs without getting him through it, but happily he had no more deadly visitants than the mosquitoes. At length a pale, purple glow through the foliage indicated approaching day, and soon thereafter Brown descended from his perch, with stiffened limbs but with a keen appetite for "chota hazri" (early breakfast), despite his night's experiences. He now found out what had so puzzled him about the tiger's ascent—namely, that the branch on which he was resting almost touched mid-way another huge semi-broken branch of a neighbouring tree that was bent down to the ground, and thus afforded easy access to the animal.

Shouldering now his antelope and birds, Brown lost no time in making tracks for camp as best he could guess. He kept firing off a shot at intervals to apprise his friends of his whereabouts, and at length a faint answering report reached his ears, sufficient to guide him on in the right direction and relieve his mind of all anxiety. Soon thereafter he was hailed by his friends amid a perfect shower of ejaculations; all the answer they got was a wail of hunger and cry for "chota hazri," after which Brown promised to relate his adventures faithfully and truly. Over a cup of steaming "mocha," hot toast, cold fowl, and eggs, Brown recounted his experiences of the night and the hair-breadth chance on which his life had hung of *waking at the right moment*. How he had done so he could only regard as providential. Two days later the skin of his tiger visitant adorned the front of the camp spread out in the sun to dry. The antelope that had attracted the brute to Brown's roost, served as a bait to lure him a second time to the tree, where he now fell a victim to the rifles of Brown and his friends who were ensconced above; and where Brown had the pleasure of passing a second night in his old quarters, though now in company with his friends, and after they had secured themselves against the dangerous access by the branch.

W. S.

A CELTIC FESTIVAL.

THE National Eisteddfod of Wales is a name well known to Saxon ears, and to many it is more than a name. Still I believe there are not a few who, like myself a little while ago, have only an indistinct notion of some mystic rites connected with Druids, bards, and harps, and bearing this strange-sounding appellation. Some years ago I happened to be staying at a little seaside place in North Wales, not far from the town where the Eisteddfod was held that year, and I found, for some days before the festival, very great difficulty in getting anything to eat, owing, as we were told, to the Eisteddfod. Hence I inferred that the Eisteddfod might be concerned with something more substantial than harp-playing, and I was reminded of a remark made to me once by an old woman in Bavaria, *à propos* of a royal visit to the town: "It's a funny thing that those grand folks always seem to send their appetites on before them." Still this did not add greatly to my knowledge of Eisteddfods or Eisteddfodau, as we should rightly call them, and I was not a little pleased this year to receive an invitation from some friends in South Wales to pay them a visit during the celebration of the Eisteddfod, which was to be held at Aberdare, a little town about four miles distant from their home. Now, I thought, I should learn the truth about those harps—so to Wales I went.

As the time of the festival drew near anxious inquiries were heard on all sides for the programme. The thought of a programme was reassuring, as it pointed to the probability of there being something besides harps. Whether the authorities were anxious to keep us in suspense as long as possible, I know not, but it was only about two days before the festival that we were able to secure a programme, and thus gain some idea of the entertainment in store for us. My first sensation on looking at it was amazement at the quantity and variety of the items. The first day's programme contained thirty divisions, and of these only one was a harp solo. There was adjudication of prizes for Welsh essays, whose titles, alas! I need not read, for a song with Welsh and English words, for pictures. There was to be a brass band competition, the thought of which alone would send a thrill of horror through any Londoner, who, like Calverley's "worn-out City clerk:"

"Thought how by his own green door,
His own green door on Campden Hill,
Two bands at least, most likely more,
Were mingling at their own sweet will
Verdi with Vance."

There was to be a glee competition too, and adjudication on the essay on "The Work and Mission of a Woman in the Family and the Sick Room." Certainly the Eisteddfod was to be comprehensive as well as national. A strange item seemed to me, awarding the prize of £10 for the best carved oak Bardic chair. But into the mystery I was soon to be initiated.

After a good deal of deliberation it was decided that the attractions of the second and third days outweighed those of the first and fourth, and as we all agreed that two whole days' "pleasure" was as much as we felt equal to, we decided to wait till the Wednesday before visiting Aberdare.

Although the Eisteddfod proper was not to begin till eleven o'clock, there were two preliminary meetings connected with it, which took place at nine o'clock, viz.—the Bardic Gorsedd, and the Cymmrodorian meeting. As the best intentions would not enable us to be in two places at once, we had to choose between the Bards with their Druidic rites, and the Cymmrodorian, i.e. Welsh Society, where questions relating to education, the Welsh language, and other matters of national interest are discussed. This met in the Temperance Hall, a building worthy its name for its total abstinence from all decoration and comfort. There we heard a paper on "University Local Examinations in Wales," read by Mrs. Bryant, a lady well known for her academic honours, and the good work she has done in the cause of higher education. The paper was interesting, and the discussion that followed animated. What most surprised me was that in an assembly which must have consisted almost entirely of educated persons it was considered necessary to have a short abstract of the paper given in Welsh for the benefit of those who could not understand English. This first impressed me with the hold the Welsh language must still have on the people—an impression that was to be deepened as the day went on.

From the Temperance Hall we adjourned to the Pavilion, where the Eisteddfod proper was to be held. This was a large tent put up for the purpose, and constructed, according to advertisement, to hold 8,000 people. Here were temporary wooden seats of so uncomfortable a description that we thought one of the items not published in the programme must have been awarding the prize for the most uncomfortable seats for visitors to the Eisteddfod. In front a large platform had been erected, and here, when we entered, the Eisteddfod band was "rendering a spirited selection of music," to quote the local papers.

When the music ceased the President of the day, who had been escorted in due honour to the Pavilion by a procession of carriages and a volunteer band, rose to give his address, the subject of which was on the "Celtic Race and Literature." As the title would indicate, the speech was learned and long—too learned and too long, I fear, for most of that large audience—since only

those in the front rows could hear, and of those that could hear not all could understand, since to many there English was a foreign tongue, and a long English speech at a Welsh festival out of place. Hence there was a good deal of that applause which signifies that the audience has had enough, and at last, I believe, some of the remarks about Druids, and quotations from Lucan's "*Pharsalia*," had to be abandoned, that the real business of the day might commence.

After the President's speech came "Bardic Addresses," and here I must explain that the Welsh bards were destroyed by Edward I., with the exception of the one who survived to pronounce the well-known curse:

"Ruin seize thee, ruthless king,
Confusion on thy banners wait!"

There still are Welsh bards, as there always have been since the beginning of time. According to ancient Celtic lore, there were originally three languages: one spoken in Heaven by God and the angels; a second, in which the Holy Scriptures were written; and a third spoken by Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and by all their posterity till the confusion of Babel. Then it was retained by the Cymry only, and they alone possess true divine inspiration, *Awen*, as they call it. The poetry of all other nations is an invention of the evil one. The language of the Cymry became that of the Bards and Druids. Nowadays a man becomes a bard by being called into the secret circle of the *Surddi*, i.e. ring of stones set up for the purpose. To this honour he attains by showing some knowledge of Welsh literature, and a certain amount of poetic power. He is then allowed to append to his name the initials B.B.D., which being translated would mean "a Bard according to the rites and privileges of the Bards of the Isle of Britain." He also adopts a *nom de plume*, and by this he is known throughout the country. It was amusing to see how well the people knew the bards by these names, how eagerly they called on some favourite to come forward and address them in verses, which either were or professed to be extemporized. I, who could not understand what was said, had the better opportunity of watching the effect on others, and of seeing that these poetic effusions really were appreciated, and the bards still dear to the hearts of their countrymen.

Then followed adjudications and competitions. We heard the "Harmonious Blacksmith" played three times on the harp. We heard three orchestral bands perform the same tune, and if there was a little monotony about the proceedings, we had the excitement of testing our critical powers, and seeing whether our own verdict agreed with that of the adjudicators. At last came the moment of the day, the supreme event of the *Eistodd fod*—the churning of the Bard. And now the use of the Bardic chair was made manifest. A carved oak chair was placed in a prominent position on the platform. Here the successful Bard was to take

his seat amid the congratulations of his fellows and the whole assembly. The excitement became intense. To win the Bardic Prize is the supreme ambition of a Welsh devotee of the Muses! Who was to be the happy man to-day? The subject was an Ode, "Truth against the World," the motto of the ancient Glamorgan bardic school. The adjudicators and several of the Bards came to the front of the platform; a long adjudication was read, and perhaps it only seemed long to me, since being in Welsh I did not understand a word of it, and at last the victor was proclaimed. He was called on to stand up, and then amid great excitement and shouts on the part of the audience of "I see him," "No, I don't," "There he is," "No, that isn't him," the happy poet was conducted in triumph to the platform. A trumpet was sounded in summons, another returned answer from the back of the tent, the band struck up "See the conquering hero comes," and the whole assembly rose to do honour to the victor. The poet was then seated in the chair, a mystic sword was suspended over his head, not by a single hair, but by the united grasp of all the bards; questions were put to the audience, and answered by a loud shout. I believe they were "Is it peace or war?" and the answer of course was "Peace." Then each of the bards addressed the victor in complimentary verses, and amid joyous excitement the chief part of the day's proceedings closed. By this time it was nearly five o'clock, and as we had left home at half-past seven, we thought it well to give up the evening concert, which concluded the day's festivities, and retire to rest early with a view to next day.

That Thursday was an exciting day indeed, for then was to be decided the great choral competition, the event for which all the village choirs throughout Wales practise for a whole year. To gain the prize in this competition is an honour second to none. The victorious village rejoices, as a Greek city must have done when one of her sons returned a conqueror from an Olympic contest; and though no Pindaric ode records the victory, a tribute equally heartfelt and less artificial is brought by all the happy villagers. This is, indeed, a national contest; the choirs are composed of colliers, hands from the works, and servant-girls; sometimes even the conductor is an amateur. The servants have their night a week to attend the choral practice, when they sing works of the best sacred composers. There is nothing artificial about the Welsh love of music; it is deep-rooted among the people, and is not merely brought to them as in England, laboriously by People's Concerts, which seek to impart to the labouring classes a taste they have not.

No wonder, then, that when we reached the station we found it so crowded that to take a ticket was a perilous undertaking. The weather was as unpropitious as it well could be; a perpetual down-pour of rain would have chilled the ardour of any but the members of a Welsh choir, but their good-humour was indomitable. Ar-

rived at Aberdare, we were glad to abandon the delights of the procession, and seek the doubtful shelter of the Pavilion. Here we found every one occupied in trying to take their places, so as to get their minimum amount of rain. Umbrellas were put up, mackintoshes were in request, and we were forcibly reminded of the hot steamy atmosphere of a bathing machine. But on the principle that it adds to our happiness to know that others are worse off than ourselves, we were soon consoled, and inclined to think ourselves fortunate when we heard that there were more than a thousand people outside who had paid for admission, and could not get in, for the excellent reason that there was not even standing room. As the day wore on, the crowd outside increased, and many stood there in the rain all day, unable either to hear or see, and yet in the evening, when we asked one or two how they fared, they assured us that they had enjoyed themselves very much. Does not this speak volumes for Welsh good-humour?

The business of the day was rendered difficult by the large crowd outside and in. It was impossible to maintain order when one mass of people were pressing in, and another vainly trying to make room for them. In vain all the dignitaries blessed with stentorian lungs came forward one after another to implore silence while speeches or competitions were going on; the President's address was almost inaudible, and Mr. Matthew Arnold, who was present, and had intended to speak, wisely abandoned the attempt after a few sentences. Many of the competitions, too, had to be given up, for nothing could reduce this vast crowd to order, except "the great competition" which they had come to hear, and for which they had clamoured. At last the authorities wisely decided to abandon the rest of the programme, and call on the competing choirs.

The subjects set were from Haydn, Spohr, and S. Jenkins—no easy task for village choirs—and they were thoroughly well rendered with feeling and appreciation. There were six choirs, and each had to sing the three pieces, and as much time was lost in arranging the singers, it was after half-past six o'clock before the adjudication could be given. We could not, therefore, wait till the end, though we were sorry not to be present at the exciting moment of award. After our long day in the tent we were glad to accept the hospitality of some kind friends at Aberdare, before we set out on our homeward journey. So we agreed to leave Aberdare by an early evening train, calmly disregarding the possibility of being left behind owing to the crowd. But we soon found that the return was no such easy matter. We set out for the station in a cab, but were soon told we must get out and walk. Indeed, the streets were almost impassable. The inhabitants of Aberdare thought fit to stretch their joyous occasion by turning out in full force into the streets; many, we heard, had been up all night, for it was not every year that the Eisteddfod came to Aber-

dare, and they could sleep at any time. Arrived at last at the station, we found there was no hope of getting in, so dense was the crowd. We stood outside and saw our train go off, and then another, and at last we were admitted to the platform, and told that it would be an hour before another train went. So we waited, not patiently I fear, until at last the train did come, but where to get a seat was a problem. We looked in all the carriages—they had filled instantaneously, it seemed; in despair we opened the door of the luggage van, and were greeted, to our no small surprise, with sounds of music issuing thence. At last we were fortunate enough to secure standing room in the guard's van, and returned home to the strains of the victorious choir, who sang "Home, sweet Home," and several Welsh hymns. I could not help thinking of the contrast between the Welsh and English holiday-makers, and congratulating myself that we were not in the land of the Saxon. At the station the victorious choir were met by their friends, who had turned out in force to escort them home in triumph, playing "See the conquering hero comes." And we for our part turned homewards, weary with the fatigues of the day, and yet feeling amply repaid by the insight we had gained into Welsh national life.

The Eisteddfod of 1887 is to be held in London, we are told, at the Crystal Palace. There many English people will have an opportunity of witnessing this festival, but I fear it will be neither Welsh nor national there. The charm of the local excitement will be wanting, crowds of merely curious spectators will go, and the bards will speak to an audience which knows them not. Still we trust the Eisteddfod may survive even this trial; and since it is, we are assured, as old as Eden, those who like myself feel that it is doing real work in preserving a nationality that might be in danger of extinction, can but hope that as it dates from the beginning, so it may endure to the end of the world.

OVER THE GARDEN WALL.

THE house next-door was taken at last. Such was almost the first piece of news with which I was greeted on returning home from Oxford for the long vacation, and I received it with sincere rejoicing. The house next-door had long been our family bugbear. It was the property of a parsimonious old gentleman who would not go to the expense of putting it in proper repair; and it had consequently remained unlet for over two years, growing gradually more and more an eyesore. The stucco was falling away from the front; several of the window-panes were broken, and the garden in the rear had become a perfect wilderness, a wild expanse of vegetation gone wrong. This was the more annoying because Dynevor Terrace, as a rule, prided itself upon its back-gardens. Each house had a lawn behind it, on which tennis could be played. I assert without hesitation that it could be played, for I have done it myself, but we didn't do it often; for the necessity of sending round to the houses on either side every other minute or so, for lost balls, interfered a good deal with the progress of the game, besides being rather trying to the tempers of the neighbouring domestics. Behind each lawn there was a grassy bank topped with evergreens; and behind this again was a piece of ground devoted to the purpose of a kitchen-garden. New tenants, as a rule, began with a flourish, even attempting such lofty achievements as sea-kale and asparagus, but their enthusiasm fell off after a little while, and the greengrocer was instructed to call as usual. We ourselves were not so ambitious. Our highest flights consisted of some consumptive-looking rhubarb, a few long-legged cabbages, and some radishes. If radishes were grown for the sake of their foliage, ours would have been a magnificent success, but they unfortunately combined a maximum of leaf with a minimum of root, and, as an article of food, were a failure. We also made an attempt at vegetable marrows, which were likewise very successful so far as foliage was concerned, but ultimately turned out to be pumpkins. Each garden had a small plantation of gooseberry-bushes on either side; but the crop consisted chiefly of small green caterpillars, hanging suspended by short threads, and apparently making believe to be gooseberries, but I cannot say that they were a satisfactory substitute. The kitchen-garden of the house next-door seemed, by dint of neglect, to have got mixed up with the professedly ornamental portion. One

or two rhubarb plants were growing, with a healthy vigour which *ours* never displayed, in the very middle of the lawn, while the kitchen-garden appeared to have started a grass-plot of its own, immediately under the gooseberry bushes.

Now, however, all was changed. The parsimonious proprietor of No. 99 had gone to that bourne whither no landlord can take either his money or his house property, and the new owner had re-decorated the house, re-organized the garden, and secured a tenant, who had already taken possession. The available information went to the extent that he was a Mr. Browne, a widower, with an only daughter, who was chaperoned by a maiden aunt, Miss Bunbury, a sister of Mr. Browne's deceased wife. In London it is by no means a matter of course to be on terms of acquaintance with one's next-door neighbour. He may be the personification of respectability, and the incarnation of every Christian virtue, but on the other hand he may not, and most Londoners think it wise to act on the latter supposition. My relatives had followed the usual practice, and we knew no more of our next-door neighbours than we ascertained involuntarily from the casual gossip of the servants, or from seeing them walking, or otherwise employed, in their garden. The wall between was over six feet high, and therefore persons walking in adjoining gardens saw nothing of each other; but from my window on the second-floor back, where I was popularly supposed to read Greek for several hours a day, I had ample opportunities for studying the out-door doings of our neighbours. Mr. Browne began his gardening operations before breakfast. He used to come out of doors in a loose holland jacket and slippers, and an old straw hat. Thus accoutred, he would plant himself, with his legs well apart, and the straw hat on the back of his head, and sternly consider some unoffending geranium. After a few minutes' cogitation he would come to the conclusion that the position of said geranium was not quite what it ought to be, and would deliberately dig it up, and plant it again some six or eight inches farther on. He would then again stand with his legs apart and the trowel behind him, and study the effect of the new arrangement. Sometimes he appeared to be pleased with the result, but more often the effect did not quite satisfy his artistic eye, and the unhappy geranium was howked up again, and planted a few inches farther on. By this time he was generally called in to breakfast, after which the garden knew him no more until the same time the following morning, when he would review his work, and occasionally shift the unfortunate plant on another stage or so. One unhappy pelargonium travelled in this way the whole length of a flower-bed, and if it had not then died, it might be travelling still. Miss Bunbury went about with an old pair of dogskin gloves many sizes too large for her, and a pair of small shears, and clipped off dead leaves, and twigs of too exuberant growth. My private nickname for her (I was nothing if not classical in those

days) was Atropos, after the lady who carried the fatal scissors and snipped the thread of life. She was a pleasant-looking old-maidish little body with a rather red nose, and I should *think* (one doesn't like to be too positive in such a delicate matter) would never see forty-five again. If she wasn't very young, however, she evidently did not consider herself very old, for her manner, as she skipped along the garden-walk, and every now and again flew off like an elderly butterfly, and swooped upon some too redundant spray, was juvenility itself. The manner of Clarissa (exquisite name!) had a dignity which would have been worthy of the divine Herè herself. From the very first moment when I saw Clarissa Browne walk round that garden with her arm round her aunt's waist, and singing,

"What will you do, love, when I am going,
With white sails flowing,
The seas beyond?"

I was her willing captive. The flood of devotion I poured down on her unconscious head from that second-floor window is beyond all telling. I mentally compared our case to that of "Romeo and Juliet." Of course there were differences. There was no ancient feud between our respective families (thank goodness for that!). Romeo, in my case, was upstairs, and the lady of my love was in the garden below, but that was a trifling detail. I was more troubled by the reflection that no Romeo that I had ever heard of wore spectacles. I made a gallant effort to dispense with mine, but I found that under such circumstances I couldn't see my beloved at all; and as, in any case, I knew that she couldn't see me, I decided to put them on again; reflecting that Shakespeare nowhere says that Romeo *didn't* wear spectacles, so that it is conceivable, after all, that he may have done so. Love is notoriously short-sighted. Mr. Irving unquestionably wears a double eyeglass in private life, so, if you come to that, why not spectacles as Romeo?

It may naturally be expected that I should give some description of the object of my affections, but I really feel scarcely equal to the task. In the first place, as the reader will already have inferred from my mention of spectacles, I am rather short-sighted, and I have to take a good deal for granted. I get a general outline, so to speak, and fancy does the rest. At the period of which I speak I had only had a sort of bird's-eye view of my beloved one from my second-floor window. Distance proverbially lends enchantment to the view, and it certainly did so in my case. The general effect was exquisite. Condescending to particulars, as the Scottish lawyers say, I don't think I could absolutely swear to much more than a transcendently consummate parting at the top of the head, a wealth of delicious back-hair let down *à la baigneuse*, and a plump yet graceful figure. I have always had a

weakness for the plump yet graceful. "Fairy-like" is all very well as a figure of speech, but I am rather of Tennyson's opinion :

"As to fairies, that do flit
Across the greensward fresh,
I hold them exquisitely knit,
But far too spare of flesh."

My Clarissa was not open to any reproach on that score. I could see that much even from my second-floor window. Happily, I was destined soon to be favoured with a closer acquaintance. One memorable night, towards the close of my vacation, between nine and ten o'clock, one of the servants from No. 99 came to our front-door in a state of breathless excitement, and said, "Oh, please, Missises compliments, and would one of the gentlemen be kind enough to come in at once, as there's a burglarer in Miss Bunbury's bedroom?" My father was out (I don't believe he would have gone if he had been at home), and on me, therefore, devolved the duty of representing the household, and of rushing to the relief of beauty in distress. I seized my boomerang, and followed the frightened damsel into No. 99. I should here explain that I have no especial predilection for the boomerang, but it happened to be the only weapon of any kind in the house, and therefore I took it, though more for the look of the thing than from any deeply-rooted confidence in its virtues as a warlike implement. It had been presented to me by a certain Uncle Dick, who had gone over to New Zealand to make his fortune. His sole worldly possessions when he returned consisted of the clothes he stood up in, a recipe for making kangaroo's tail soup, and the boomerang, which, as I have already mentioned, he presented to me. He used to explain, particularly after two or three glasses of whisky and water, how this deadly weapon, hurled by hands of the skilful savage, would not only bring down his foe with unerring certainty, but, having done its work, would fly back and replace itself, with a graceful somersault, at its master's feet. I shall never forget the blood-curdling impressiveness of his manner, as he replied, in answer to a question on my part, "Killed anybody, sir? To my certain knowledge that boomerang has killed thirteen men, besides women and children!" He never would bind himself to the exact number of the women and children, but he wouldn't bate a fraction of the thirteen males. I tried it one afternoon in the Regent's Park, I myself representing the noble savage. At my first attempt I flung it into a tree, and had to pay a boysixpence to fetch it down again. Upon a second trial the wretched implement nearly killed a small child, a good fifty yards from the spot at which I aimed, and then cannoned on to a park-keeper. It cost me half a crown to pacify the nurse, and as much more to square the park-keeper, while the original sufferer refused to be comforted under two-pennyworth of almond-

rock and a ginger-bread monkey. After this experience I came to the conclusion that the boomerang, like other arms of precision, requires practice, and I determined to practise accordingly; but I had found no opportunity of doing so before I was thus called upon to use it in grim earnest. As may be supposed, under the circumstances, I had not implicit reliance on my weapon, but it was better than nothing, and I had a dim idea that if by some means I could call attention before the combat to the number of victims it had already slain, the burglar might possibly surrender without a struggle.

I was met in the hall by Miss Bunbury and her niece, the former in a state of high excitement; the latter much calmer, and displaying a noble fortitude which, if possible, increased the intensity of my admiration for her. For the first time I was enabled to see her face to face, and was delighted to find that the promise of my bird's-eye view was more than fulfilled by a closer inspection. I was very nearly forgetting all about the burglar, but was recalled to a sense of my position by Miss Bunbury, who exclaimed, clasping her hands with emotion:

"How good of you to come! How brave! How noble! How can we ever thank you, Mr.—?"

She paused, and I was obliged to supply the blank. "Higginbottom," I said with an effort. I had long felt that Higginbottom was a mean and ugly patronymic (indeed, I had already made a fruitless attempt to get my father to change it to Higginbotham). But how mean, how ugly, I had never realized until it was thus drawn out of me under the calm gaze of my beloved. "Theophilus Higginbottom," I added, with a strong emphasis on the Theophilus. My adored one smiled (I hoped it was at the Theophilus and not at the Higginbottom). "It is really very kind of you, Mr. Higginbottom," she said, "though I trust the matter is not so serious as my aunt imagines."

"Serious, my dear! If a burglar in one's own wardrobe isn't serious, I should like to know what is."

"Yes, auntie; but then, you know, last time, when you would have it there was a man in the bath-room, you thought that was serious too."

"I was wrong in that case, my dear, I admit, but any one might have been deceived then; but there is no mistake this time, for I heard his breathing as distinctly as possible. But now Mr. Higgin-what-is-it has come I don't feel nearly so nervous. What a thing it is to be a MAN!"

How circumstances alter cases. If I could have got my divine Clarissa to have looked at me with that self-same expression I should have been raised to the seventh heaven of delight. As it was, I took it with the most philosophic indifference.

"What is that you are carrying?" inquired my divinity; "a scimitar?"

"N—no," I replied, "not exactly a scimitar. But it is a very deadly weapon. This is a Boomerang. It has killed"—here I raised my voice, and spoke with great distinctness, in hopes that the burglar would hear me and take to flight—"thirteen men, besides women and children."

Miss Bunbury's eyes sparkled, but I fancied my Clarissa looked at me with a glance of aversion, and I hastened to explain (in a much lower tone), "I didn't do it myself, you know. Aborigines—natives, in fact."

"Oh!" said Miss Bunbury. "Ah!" said Clarissa. There was a marked difference of expression between the two exclamations. It seems to me that Clarissa's was expressive of the relief of a tender heart, Miss Bunbury's of a blood-thirsty disappointment.

"Hadn't we better go upstairs?" said Clarissa, after a pause. "If Mr. Higginbottom is going to capture your burglar, auntie, we may as well get it over."

It struck me that this was a trifle heartless, but no doubt the dear girl didn't realize the terrible risk I ran.

"By all means; only let me get at him," I said, with a ferocity which I was far from feeling.

Accordingly we ascended the stairs in single file, I leading the way, with the boomerang poised on my shoulder. There was gas lighted on every landing.

"Which room?" I asked in a whisper.

"The second-floor front," was the reply, delivered in a similar tone.

"You won't kill him while we are in the room, will you?" said Miss Bunbury.

I felt that I might safely promise *that*. I only hoped that *he* wouldn't kill *me*.

"No," I said loudly, for the burglar's benefit. "I will promise not to kill him while you are in the room; indeed, if he will surrender at once, without any trouble, I am willing to spare his life."

By this time we had got inside the room. I prepared, with proper precaution, to look under the bed; but Miss Bunbury interposed:

"He isn't there," she said, "he's in the wardrobe, locked in." And truly I fancied I could hear, proceeding from the article in question, a subdued breathing. A happy thought struck me:

"If he is locked in, hadn't we better send for the police before we let him out?" But I saw the calm eye of Clarissa resting upon me, and its expression goaded me into rashness. Discretion is the better part of valour. Shakespeare says so, and I quite agree with him, but you can't get women to see it in that light. Clarissa's good opinion must be maintained at all hazards. "No," I said, with a perish-the-thought kind of expression, as if somebody else had made the policeman suggestion; "we'll have him

out first, and see what he is made of. Stand back, ladies ;” and thereupon I suddenly turned the key of the wardrobe, and brandishing the boomerang round my head, sprang back to the centre of the room, to await the expected onslaught. Strange to say, there wasn’t any; the door remained closed. Emboldened by this hesitation on the part of my enemy, I knocked boldly with the boomerang on the panel, saying in my sternest accents : “ In the name of the law, come out.”

There was no reply in words, but from behind the closed door came a pitiful “ miaouw.” I boldly flung the door open, and there, at the bottom of the hanging press, was a handsome tortoiseshell cat, with a newly-born family, calmly reposing in an open bonnet-box, on a heap of feminine *fal-de-rals*.

Miss Bunbury gave a little scream.

“ You wicked, wicked cat, to frighten us all so dreadfully ! And, oh, what have you done ? My poor, poor bonnet, new only last Saturday ! ”

It was too true. Pussy, who had doubtless lived in good families, had determined that the arrangements for her *accouche-ment* should be in the very latest style, and regardless of expense. The interesting event had taken place in Miss Bunbury’s best bonnet.

Among the advantages of belonging to the male sex, I should certainly include, as a most valuable branch of the prerogative, that of being able to swear on sufficient occasion. I would not have the expedient lightly used ; I hold that no man should swear *nisi dignus vindice nodus*, in our classical phrase ; but there *are* times when nothing short of the “ big, big d— ” is adequate to the occasion, or will act as an efficient lightning-conductor to the overcharged heart. Miss Bunbury had not this resource ; she spluttered out a few feminine expletives, as inadequate to the occasion as a milk-jug to extinguish a conflagration, and burst into tears. I caught Clarissa’s eye, and half thought that I surprised a smile, but if so it was instantly repressed ; she addressed herself with the utmost gravity to console her sorrowing aunt, who after a little while began to cheer up a little, and to appreciate the humorous side of the matter.

“ It is provoking, though, now isn’t it ? ” she said, laughing through her tears. “ A new bonnet that was to have lasted me all the summer. You naughty, *naughty* cat ! ”

Puss gave a deprecating purr, as though the matter were really hardly worth making such a fuss about, and set to work again to wash her babies.

“ And to think that we should have sent for Mr. Wiggin—Higinbottom on a false alarm.”

“ We ! You, auntie,” said Clarissa. “ You really must not bring me into the question. I should not have sent for anybody.”

“ My dear,” said her aunt, “ that’s all very well for you to say

now. I should not have sent for Mr. Higgin—Wigginbottom myself merely to show him that the cat had—behaved in such a remarkable manner; but consider, my dear, if it *had* been burglars!”

“You’ve cried ‘Wolf’ too often, auntie,” said Clarissa, “for me to be much afraid. In our last house, Mr. Higginbottom, auntie, would have it that there was a burglar in the bath-room, but it proved to be only a tap which somebody had left dripping.”

“But we are not the less obliged, I am sure, dear, to Mr. Wigginbottom for his prompt and courageous assistance. I do *admire* a brave man. I wish—” (this with a gush of emotion)—“I wish it *had* been a burglar, for Mr. Wigginbottom’s sake.”

“Thank you,” I said, “it’s just as well as it is; don’t you think so, Miss Browne?”

“I do indeed,” she said. “I am not particularly fond of cats, but I prefer them to burglars; in any case, we are deeply indebted to you, Mr. Higginbottom; it will be pleasant, in case of alarm, to know that we have so courageous a neighbour.”

Her praise had such an intoxicating effect on me, that I was very nearly expressing a wish that they might be alarmed in the same manner every night; but reflecting that this was a little too much to expect of the cat, and withal would hardly sound as romantic as I intended, I refrained, and shortly afterwards took my leave.

In due course I retired to my couch, but not to sleep. Over and over again I pictured to myself the scene, the excitement of Miss Bunbury, the calm fortitude of my Clarissa, and my own part in the matter, which I flattered myself I had sustained with a considerable amount of dignity. The *dénouement* was a little bit of an anti-climax, it was true, but that was no fault of mine. I went to No. 99 prepared to do battle with a genuine burglar. He might have been a burglar of the most ferocious description, a burglar of colossal stature, and provided with a whole armoury of lethal weapons, and I had faced him—or at least I was prepared to face him—with no protection save a simple boomerang; which, by the way, I didn’t know how to use. It really seemed to me, upon reflection, that I had been extremely imprudent; if there *had* been a burglar at No. 99 he might have done me a serious injury. Fortunately things had taken a more favourable turn, and the only question was how best to use my gallant conduct (I felt that this was really a legitimate way of describing it) to my advantage with Clarissa. At this point I (at last) fell asleep, and dreamed a series of remarkable dreams, in which bonnets, burglars, boomerangs, and tortoiseshell cats were mixed up in wild confusion. At one stage of the proceedings, I remember Clarissa was about to marry a burglar, and I was obliged to give the bride away, when Miss Bunbury, armed with the boomerang, forbade the banns, and claimed the burglar as her long-lost brother. I

think the horror I then went through completed my subjugation. I awoke with a firm resolution that, come what would, I would declare myself, and know my fate. I would not let concealment, "like a worm i' the bud," prey on *my* damask cheek. (I don't know, upon calmer reflection, that there was much "damask" about the matter, but I think there cannot be much doubt about the "cheek.")

Having arrived at this conclusion, the next question was—how? After due consideration I decided to write to my adored one, in the first instance, a letter, entreating to be allowed a private interview. I felt convinced that if I were only allowed to plead my cause face to face, my impassioned fervour would speedily bear down all opposition. If not—but *that* alternative was really hardly worth considering.

No time was to be lost, for I was going back to Oxford three days later. Accordingly, no sooner had I finished breakfast, and settled myself comfortably in my sanctum, ostensibly for the deglutition of sundry tough passages of the *Œdipus Coloneus*, than I addressed myself to composition, and indited a letter as follows:

"ADORED CLARISSA,

"The incident of last night (though it terminated in an unexpected manner) will have given you some faint idea of what I am ready to do and dare in order to win a smile from you. Give me, I entreat you, an opportunity of pleading my suit in person. A simple hearing is all I ask; my heart tells me that I shall not plead in vain.

"Your devoted

"THEOPHILUS.

"P.S. Place your reply on the top of the wall in the arbour."

I should explain that there was in the garden of No 99 a weeping ash, whose branches overhung the wall into our own garden. On the No. 99 side of the wall they were trained over a wooden framework, forming a rustic arbour, in which Clarissa and her aunt were wont to sit at work, and occasionally to take tea. A blissful thought presented itself to me that perhaps ere long I myself might be invited to partake of tea in that arbour; and I would have cheerfully run even the risk of caterpillars down my back and earwigs in my teacup (which I know by experience to be the normal conditions of taking tea in an arbour) for such a consummation. Having indited my letter, the next thing was to get it to its destination, and it struck me that the arbour would be at once a convenient and romantic medium of communication. No doubt I might have sent my missive by post, but that would have been a terribly commonplace way of doing things. Happily, the very same evening I saw, from my watch-tower, Clarissa and her aunt, after strolling for a little while in the garden, take their seats

in the arbour, each occupied with some form of fancy-work. Fortune favoured me, for just as it began to grow dusk, the servant came into the garden and spoke to Miss Bunbury, who immediately followed her into the house, leaving my beloved still seated in the arbour. This was my opportunity. I flew downstairs, passed rapidly into the garden, and walking on the grass-plot so that my footsteps should not be heard, made my way under the ash-tree, and gently dropped my letter over the wall. I heard an exclamation on the other side, but I did not wish to precipitate matters, and I therefore at once retired as silently as I could.

Again I had a most uncomfortable night, my mind being distracted by a host of harassing speculations. Had I made my epistle too warm, or not warm enough, and how would my *Clarissa* take it? Had I exercised a wise discretion in the mode of its delivery? for a terrible fear had struck me (suggested by the somewhat alarmed tone of her exclamation), that I had dropped it precisely on her head. What would her answer be, or would she vouchsafe an answer at all? Happily these curious speculations were speedily set at rest, for the very next morning, on looking out of my window, I saw the glint of a little white object lying on the wall beneath the ash-tree. It must be—yes, it was—the answer to my letter. So prompt a reply could be but of happy augury. I speedily secured it, and read as follows:

“I fear it is scarcely maidenly to reply to your communication, and yet I feel that after your gallant conduct of the other night, it would be ungrateful not to hear what you desire to say to me. If you are not afraid to venture over the wall this evening at a quarter to ten, in the kitchen-garden, close to the cucumber-frame, you will find

“CLARISSA.”

Venture over a garden-wall! I would have ventured into a den of lions, or into the jaws of a battery, to meet *Clarissa*. Or at any rate I fully believed that I would. Possibly I had a latent consciousness that she was too sensible to make an appointment in such an inconvenient locality, and this no doubt sustained my resolution.

I really hardly know how I got through that day. *Œdipus Coloneus* was simply nowhere. I went out in the afternoon and purchased a pair of delicate lavender gloves, and a necktie that might have softened the heart of a gorgon, and towards evening I put on all my Sunday garments, with a new pair of light trousers that were a perfect poem; and thus arrayed, I waited eagerly for the hour of my tryst. I had some difficulty in satisfactorily accounting for the unusual gorgeousness of my apparel, and the questions of my young brother in particular brought me

to the very verge of lunacy. I am very fond of him in a general way, but if I could have murdered him (without being found out) that evening I really think I should have done it. I dissembled, however, and at the appointed hour, punctual to the moment, I stole out into the garden. I put on my lavender kids under the ash-tree, and then advancing into the kitchen-garden, proceeded to select a convenient spot to climb the wall. I examined several, but they all appeared to be equally inconvenient. I had no idea that climbing a mere garden-wall was such a difficult matter. I have not had much gymnastic experience, and I had a vague notion that as long as you could get your hands on the top of the obstacle, the rest of your body would follow somehow or other. I found, however, that the force of gravitation was considerably greater than I had supposed, and I began to deliberate whether I should have time to go back into the house and fetch a kitchen-chair, when I heard a faint cough on the other side of the wall. My charmer was there, at a few feet distance, just on the other side of that ridiculous obstacle. "Perish kitchen-chairs!" I inwardly ejaculated, and with a fixed resolve to do or die this time, I dashed at the wall, and succeeded in getting my elbows (sadly excoriated, by the way) on the top of it. My lavender gloves were a wreck, but that was a minor consideration. All would have been well, but that, as ill-luck would have it, our house-dog, Gruff, chanced at this moment to be let out for his evening walk in the garden, and seeing a pair of legs dangling in an unaccustomed position from the wall, "went for" them with great vivacity. If he would have waited long enough for me to speak to him, doubtless he would have ceased his attack, but there was no time to parley, and Gruff was by no means the kind of dog of whom it is said that his bark is worse than his bite. I made a frantic spring upwards just as his teeth met in the poetic trousers. The cloth, perhaps fortunately, gave way, and Gruff secured a handsome sample. He tried for another, but fear lent me agility, and I rolled over the wall and fell on the other side. I landed on one of the largest gooseberry-bushes, which broke my fall, after a fashion; but oh! those awful prickles. I have never been able to relish gooseberry-tart since. For the moment I was all but stunned, and hardly knew where I was, but I struggled somehow or other off the gooseberry-bush, and sat up *sur mon séant*, as the French say. A female voice tenderly whispered: "Theophilus, dear Theophilus, say you are not hurt." I would have said a great deal to please my Clarissa, but my habitual regard for truth wouldn't let me go so far as *that*. "N—not very much," I stammered, gallantly ignoring sundry severe bruises, and about five-and-twenty gooseberry prickles which were still sticking in various parts of my person. I struggled to my feet. Clarissa stood before me, wisely arrayed in a long waterproof cloak, and her head enveloped in a Shetland shawl, which left but a small

portion of her features visible. "Beloved Clarissa," I said, clasping her hand; but just then the moon came from behind a cloud, and shed a silver beam upon my charmer's nose. It was the wrong nose! Clarissa's was a delicate aquiline, and white as the driven snow. The nose before me was an unmistakable *retroussé*, and of a roseate tint. "Clarissa?" I said again, but this time interrogatively. "And what have you to say to Clarissa?" was the arch reply, the Shetland shawl being at the same time thrown a little back. "Miss Bunbury!" I exclaimed, aghast. "Nay, dearest, why this sudden coldness?" she replied. The situation was one which did not admit of explanation. There was nothing for it but flight, and I fled accordingly. Fortunately there was a plum-tree trained against the wall on that side, and clutching wildly at its branches, I raised myself by their means to the top of the wall, and thence rolled on to the gooseberry-bushes on our own side. Gruff was waiting for me, and bit me in two or three places, but I was fortunately able to make myself known to him before he had time to do me any permanent injury. What became of Miss Bunbury I cannot say, but I heard her call me a perfidious man, as I vanished over the wall, and I rather infer, from certain sounds of breaking glass, that she incautiously sat down on the cucumber-frame.

The reader will have anticipated how my mistake arose. Miss Bunbury and Miss Browne were both Clarissas, the latter having been named after her aunt; and my unfortunate shortsightedness had caused me to deliver my *billet-doux* to the wrong lady. I returned to Oxford the very next day, effectually cured of my passion so far as the Clarissas were concerned. A casual letter from home informed me soon after, as a piece of local news, that Miss Browne was engaged to a young naval officer, Lieutenant Hardwicke. Hence, doubtless, her frequent musical allusions to the "white sail flowing, the seas beyond." When I again returned home, and chanced to meet our neighbours, we bowed in the most distant manner. Meanwhile, I venture to commend to our legislators, who are frittering away their energies over deceased wives' sisters, and criminal law amendment, and other matters of quite secondary importance, the desirability of bringing in a short bill, making it penal for aunts and nieces to have the same Christian names.

ANGELO J. LEWIS.

OUT OF THE WORLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DIARY OF A PLAIN GIRL."

The Falcon Inn,
St. Mawgan-in-Pydar,
Vale of Lanherne, Cornwall.
October.

DEAREST PSYCHE,

Your most meagre little note, announcing your arrival in town, was forwarded to me here. Alas, my friend! we seem fated never to meet, like the pathetic little man and woman in the weather-prophet toy of one's youth; I used to feel so sorry for the poor woman as she emerged from her gay house, prophesying sunshine, only to find that her mate, in obedience to some cruel and inscrutable law of his being, had withdrawn at her approach! Shall I read you a sermon on that toy? It would not be difficult, but you shall be spared for this once.

To speak quite plainly, while you were disporting yourself in the country, I was languishing in town, and now the situation is reversed. Yes, I have lost every claim to consideration as a person of fashion, and must confess to having stayed in London all through August and September. I will not trouble you with any account of the various complications which led to my abandonment of the usual "fitting;" suffice, that they arose in about an equal degree from "the eternal lack of pence," and the engagement and marriage of my sister Josephine. I had determined to follow the example of several millions of my fellow-townfolk, and do without a holiday altogether; but when the excitement of wedding preparations was over, and the culminating catastrophe of wedding functions had "supervened;" when the boys had gone back to school, and a company of sparrows discussing the rice on the pavement outside was the only reminder of what had occurred, a great blankness fell upon my soul.

I found that, like Lady Clara Vere de Vere, I was sickening of a vague disease, but, not being possessed of "boundless wealth," my case was even more pitiable than that of the sweet-eyed enchantress.

Genuine Cockney as I am, I began to

"Loathe the squares and streets
And the faces that one meets"

with an unutterable loathing. "Anywhere, anywhere out of the world," I cried; and then it was that some one suggested this place as likely to meet the wants of a seedy and penurious spinster desirous of rest and change. So one day, now about two weeks ago, I found myself speeding westward across the October country, and on the afternoon of the morrow (for I had passed the night with kind friends at Plymouth) I alighted at a little wayside station, where a waggonette from the Falcon Inn awaited me. A long drive across a beautiful autumnal country, a cautious descent into a green and placid valley, and the carriage drew up before a little oblong stone house, with an unobtrusive sign-board above the door. A kind hostess came out to meet me and led me into a charming room, with books, and flowers, and pictures, and a log fire blazing merrily in the grate. Presently a dimpled maid appeared bearing on her tray a dainty meal wherein home-made bread and clotted cream figured largely, and where a fragrant teapot crowned the whole. I began to feel that my rash and sudden flight from town was turning out more satisfactorily than many a planned and premeditated holiday. The two weeks that I have been here have only served to confirm and deepen the first pleasant impression; but the happiest holiday, like the happiest nation, is apt to have no history, and I am taking mine ease at mine inn at the expense of my correspondents!

You are one of the rare people who like "descriptions," which makes the lack of adventure less of a stumbling-block in writing to you, although, on the other hand, I was never a good hand at describing. Well, dear, as to the landscape, it is very big, and very green, and very uninhabited-looking. Down in my valley, my Vale of Lanherne (a nice romantic name, is it not? Sounds as though there ought to be a maid of Lanherne!) there are elm-trees, and little rushing brooks with moss-grown, fern-tufted banks and bridges; but beyond there is nothing but wave upon wave of downs, intersected by deep lanes, and terminating in one direction in tall slaty cliffs overhanging the Atlantic Ocean. As for the cottages, they are few and far between, and quite uninteresting—small, square blocks of stone and cement, slate-roofed, drab-tinted. Their distinguishing feature is that you never find two on the same level; each little house is stuck about at random on a little shelf of its own. The people are pleasant and good-looking, especially the men and the children; if our friend Gambogia were here, she would have half the village "sitting" to her in no time. I think I see you smile ironically as you read. "And this Cockney is deceiving herself, and thinks to deceive me!" you are saying; "this person, who has a confessed preference for chimney-tops to tree-tops, is pretending to enjoy herself in a rustic solitude in the heart of October." No, dear, frankly, I am *not* playing at Wordsworth, not trying to "get at one with

nature," as one used to in the old days, before one had come to recognize one's limits; and I *do* enjoy my diurnal *Pall Mall*, and am not in the least indifferent to my weekly *Academy*. But I am genuinely interested in the hitherto unknown aspect of life which a village community such as ours presents.

I have given up all attempts at work, though I occasionally *improve my French!* Do you remember our paper-backed library in the Black Forest last year? My kind hostess has instructed me in bread-making and cream-scalding, and is quite capable of giving instructions in a great many other things. We mix Matthew Arnold with our pastry, and wage war on questions of "the infinite" as we chop meat for pies; all this morning we were up to the eyes in argument, and up to the elbows in flour! It is quite refreshing to find people honestly interested in thinking out things for themselves, after the *tout-est-dit* attitude of the intellectual Londoner. It recalls the dear old days at Princess Ida's. Ah! those fierce old fights round the fire! . . . Malthusia has five children now, and never talks political economy; Agnostica has gone over to Rome; Democratica has married a capitalist and cuts all her old friends. . . "But, tush! I am puling," as Mr. Rutland Barrington says in the "Sorcerer."

This afternoon I went up to the convent of Lanherne, which, screened by many trees, directly faces the "Falcon." In this fine old building, with its delicate stone-work, delicately tinted by the hand of Time, are immured twenty ladies, nuns of the Carmelite order. The woman who showed me the chapel and burial ground (I was not allowed to penetrate into the building itself) spoke with enthusiasm of convent existence. It was a beautiful life, she said—for those who had the vocation! Did she propose taking the veil?

Alas! she had not the "vocation"!

Near the convent, and originally belonging to it, is the beautiful church with its tower of mellow stone and its grass-grown graveyard. Our idiot boy (of course we have an idiot boy, though his name is not "Foy") was craning his long thin neck over the churchyard wall as I came through the lych-gate, an hour ago; the sun was setting behind the tall elms; the children were playing by the gold-tinted brook; a company of geese was promenading the road, engaged in animated conversation; a little farther on I could see that anomalous being, the village policeman (he is a most spurious-looking object), wisely passive as usual, and the rector's wife was speeding up the hill with a basket on her arm: nothing could have been more peaceful or rustic, but do you know what happened to me? I thought I heard a distant newsboy calling out Special Editions and terrible catastrophes! My case strikes me as more pathetic than that of poor Susan who imagined a river flowing through Cheapside!

I have had one really important experience—I have seen the Sea. Oh yes, I know that one used to go annually to the “seaside” in one’s youth and ply one’s wooden spade near the bathing machines; that one has fretted and strutted on a good many “Esplanades,” and lain prostrate in many a “Ladies’ Cabin,” in later years; but that was quite another thing. Two miles’ walk over the downs brought me to a long sandy tract, interspersed with brackish pools and rank grass. Over the sand I sped, in the face of a great sou’-wester, breathless, eager, towards the long creamy breakers.

A great solitary sea was churning and booming away at the base of the dark cliffs; nothing hut sky, and ocean, but cliff and crag to be seen. No pier, no breakwater, no houses, save a lonely coast-guard’s hut in the distance. The sight took away one’s breath more effectually than the sou’-wester itself. I understood, for the first time, what poets mean when they write about the sea. This was no bathing pond for Cockneys, but the “great sweet mother, mother and lover of men, the sea,” whose “sweet hard kisses are strong like wine,” whose “large embraces are keen like pain.” I had quite a little rapture, all by myself, for which, alas! I paid with a bad headache next day.

“Is this the mighty ocean—is this all?” I wonder if Landor knew the north-west coast of Cornwall?

Excuse these musings of a solitary, and write soon; or you might pay me a visit. You could ride and drive to your heart’s content. Personally, I am satisfied to jog about the lanes in a disreputable-looking donkey-cart. The donkey is sturdy if obstinate, and can be brisk on occasion; and the hedgerows, crowning the deep lanes, are in all their autumn glory of russet leaves, red berries, gleaming blackberries, and purple sloes. In the midst of this October wealth it is strange to see such survivals of summer as flowering honey-suckle; and the cottage gardens are aglow with fuchsias and hydrangeas.

In any case I shall see you soon. Much as I admire the superior peace, simplicity, and beauty of a country life, I know that my own place is among the struggling crowd of dwellers in cities. I am like Browning’s “icy fish” in “Caliban”—do you remember?—who

“Longed to ‘scape the rock stream where she lived
And thaw herself within the lukewarm brine. . . .
Only she ever sickened, found repulse
At the other kind of water. . . .”

With which effusion I conclude.

Write! I have a morbid craving for the postman. He only comes once a day!

Yours ever,
MELISSA.

JERSEY.

IN the good old days, sixty years ago, the ordinary communication between Jersey and England was made by sailing boats. Her Majesty's ships brought the mails three times a week *via* Weymouth, and everything depended on wind and tide. In a Jersey newspaper, the *Chronique* of 1816, I see the news from London was quoted at nine days old, so that before a stirring event was discussed in the island it was almost forgotten on the other side of the water. But that is all changed now. There is daily steam communication. Thousands of passengers pass between England and the Channel Islands every year, and each year brings an increase of visitors.

Talking of that, the British tourist is not a pleasant fellow-traveller, especially at sea. In the months of July and August, released from their prisons behind counters in Oxford Street or St. Paul's Churchyard, they rush off in search of a month's holiday by the seaside, and the Channel Islands are an increasingly favourite resort. They come on board, these tourists, at Southampton or Weymouth, dressed in loudly-patterned ulsters, sand-shoes, and hats with white puggarees, or green veils wound round them. They call loudly for brandy or beer, sing snatches of music-hall songs, and even execute *pas seuls* on the deck, in imitation of the last pantomime at Drury Lane or the Princess's. Nor does their hilarity end till the steamer—if it is the Southampton boat—has reached the Needles, and the rolling Channel waves begin to lift her gently up and down. After that, should there happen to be a light breeze—a “tidy lop on”—great silence usually falls on the ship, till finally nothing is heard but the throbbing of the screw, mingled with occasional groans and other horrible sounds not nice to talk about.

The approach to the islands is very picturesque, especially on a bright summer's morning. The Queen, in her “Journal in the Highlands,” speaking about it says: “The colouring and the effect of light were indescribably beautiful,” and “I never saw a more beautiful deep-blue sea: quite like Naples.” The red granite rocks, covered in the month of July with purple flowering heath, rise from a sparkling sea of so intense a blue that if an artist painted it faithfully on canvas it would be thought exaggerated and extravagant; but the air is very rarified, and the depths and variations of colour, from the palest greens to the deepest

cobalts and ultramarines, are only characteristic of the place. In the vegetation also there is a richness and luxuriance, as though a breath from the tropics had touched it. The myrtles grow like laurel trees. In sheltered spots a geranium will live out of doors winter after winter, till it covers the side of a house, and finally its stem becomes like the trunk of a tree. The passion-flower literally grows at the gate. There are some sweet little fern valleys, and lizards, often as much as a foot long, with emerald-green backs and orange stomachs, dart in and out of the long grass, or bask in the sunshine on old ivy-covered walls; they are quite harmless, and very pretty to look at. Toads, which are not so interesting, attain an unusually large size. Falle, in his history of Jersey, speaks of the toad as being a deformity in the island. It is certainly not pleasant, whilst strolling down a lane on a summer's night, to put your foot on a large soft substance almost as big as a soup-plate. No doubt these poor toads are also harmless and very good gardeners, but there exists a prejudice against them, and people don't get over it when it comes to close quarters.

Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands, is within fifteen miles only of the coast of France. It is supposed to have been severed from the mainland about the year 769, nearly three hundred years before the battle of Hastings. The forest of Sisci, mentioned in ancient writings, lay between Jersey and the diocese of Coutances. The Channel Islands are now the only portion of the old Duchy of Normandy pertaining to the crown.

Jersey is under twenty miles long by five to six broad, and contains a population of nearly sixty thousand. It is rather over two hundred miles from London, thirty-three from St. Malo, and thirty from Granville; by either of which latter routes there is direct railroad communication with Paris. St. Helier, the principal town, is supposed to have taken its name from St. Hilaire, a hermit, who, it is related, was barbarously murdered by Norman pirates. The cell in which he once lived stands on a lofty rock just beyond Elizabeth Castle, and on the same ground where the old abbey formerly stood. Elizabeth Castle is surrounded by water except at low tide, and a detachment of artillery is quartered there. Charles II. is said to have taken refuge in Elizabeth Castle during some of his many wanderings, and in proof of the assertion a top-boot is shown—a very clumsy affair—which the merry monarch is supposed to have left behind him.

There are twelve parishes in Jersey, each having a parish church with a Jersey man for rector. It has a parliament of its own. The States consist of fifty members. Twelve gentlemen, who are called jurats, sit as magistrates in the Royal Court. It has a governor, a bailiff, an attorney-general, a solicitor-general. Every man is obliged to serve in the Militia, unless he can show good reasons for not being able to do so; and a grand review of

the troops takes place once a year, generally on the Queen's birthday.

There are two railroads in Jersey. One was opened in 1873, the other in 1874. Both start from St. Helier, one goes to Gorey through a rather remarkable cutting made through the solid rock below Fort Regent, the other skirts the picturesque bay of St. Aubins, and extends to within a short distance of the Corbière lighthouse. The whole distance this railway traverses is not above seven miles, but it is a great convenience for residents in the town or visitors to the island, who are thus able for a small sum of money to make an excursion to the wildest and grandest part of the sea coast. Going out to picnic on the rocks at the Corbière is fast becoming as fashionable as arranging parties at the Inventories was last year.

The railway traffic to Gorey is not so great as to St. Aubins, except perhaps in the race week, though Mont Orgueil Castle is well worth visiting, being connected as it is with many interesting historical events. Standing on the beautiful ivy-covered ramparts the coast of France is so distinctly visible that with the naked eye carts may be seen driven along the beach. The Jersey Derby is held annually on Gorey Common. The horses run are generally of local celebrity, and although on a miniature scale, the same programme is gone through as on Epsom Downs. Carriages full of smartly-dressed ladies are drawn up in lines, under a scorching sun. Bets are made—in moderation—luncheons eaten; champagne flows, and dancers, showmen, acrobats, together with gentlemen versed in the mysteries of the three-card trick, find it worth their while to come over from England expressly for the occasion.

Jersey is allowed to be celebrated for three things—potatoes, pears, and pretty girls. About the potato there can be no doubt. Sometimes in the St. Helier's harbour there are no less than seventeen to twenty steamers, some with the Blue Peter flying, and all waiting to carry off potatoes to the English markets. Advance and progress no doubt have their advantages, but in many respects a place is ruined for the inhabitants when its land-owners aspire to grow for Covent Garden; or at all events it is spoiled for those people whose limited means oblige them to live cheaply.

At one time in its history Jersey was considered a most desirable residence for retired officers, whose services Government had not rewarded with sufficient liberality, or people who were suffering from a misunderstanding with their creditors; but here things are changed: great cheapness is no longer a characteristic of the island, and it is known a man can be arrested for debt.

Appropos of the subject of arrests, a curious incident is said to have once happened in Jersey. A man who owed his creditors in England a sum, about which I will not venture to be too accurate, arrived in the island. One of his angry and baffled

creditors made up his mind to follow. Unfortunately for him his debtor was warned of his coming. Now, by a Jersey law then existing, an order to a sheriff was sufficient to have a man arrested. The debtor, seeing no other escape, was determined to be the first in the field, so on his creditor landing from the boat he was promptly arrested on a fictitious claim, and in default of finding security was at once lodged in prison. It is added, the ill-used creditor, not desiring to go further into the intricacies of Jersey law, was glad to purchase his liberty at any cost, and make tracks for England.

But to return to the potatoes. No less than 48,431 tons were shipped out of the Island of Jersey last year, and taking into consideration the size of the place, one marvels how it can be done. But in order to rear such a crop, season after season, more and more land is devoted to the purpose. The native Jersey man has the credit of being a prudent man, and as long as the demand continues, the supply is forthcoming. The early potato wants plenty of sun, so trees are ruthlessly cut down and everything that casts a shade is cleared away. Côtils, formerly so picturesque with their apple orchards, their green slopes covered with flowers and foliage, are now laid bare, and houses that look sufficiently imposing to warrant a lawn and geranium-beds have instead the potato-field right up to the hall door and under the window-sills. There can be no doubt but that Jersey is not as pretty as it used to be, and the reason is obvious. The potato mania is ruining its beauty. It even seems possible the time may come when a barren rock will be all that remains of what was once considered so lovely.

There is already a great dearth of pasture-land in Jersey, and the traditional Alderney cow standing up to its middle in long, sweet grass, will soon live only in pictures. Jersey cattle grow uncomfortably lean during the winter months, and some of the cart and farm horses look as if they were only kept up by the shafts.

Jersey cows obtain a large price. One sold not long ago in the parish of Trinity to Mr. Cooper, an American gentleman, fetched the sum of one thousand pounds, and no less than one thousand eight hundred and ninety-five cows and heifers were exported from the island in 1883.

The Chaumontel pear has for a very long while enjoyed an almost world-wide popularity, and it continues to hold its own. These particular pears are sold in the island from four to five pounds a hundred, and exported in large quantities every season. It is a winter pear and keeps till January. To be eaten in perfection, it should, as it approaches maturity, be sat up with all night and cut at its supreme moment!

Large quantities of grapes are also grown in Jersey, and the exportation of these and other fruits reaches over 27,450 cwt.

annually. The vineries built on the sunny slopes of the hills are of immense length, and yearly increase in numbers.

In St. Helier new and imposing markets have been lately built, at a cost of something like fifteen thousand pounds, and on market days the stalls, piled up with tempting fruit and flowers, are well worth seeing, the Norman caps, red-crossed shawl, and wooden shoes of the old women who sit behind the counters giving just a foreign touch to the general picturesqueness.

Speaking of the investment of public money for public buildings, Jersey at one period was nearly having a magnificent harbour. The story goes that the natives of Jersey were fired to undertake this great work by hearing that Prince Albert, on one of his visits to the island, had remarked that the inhabitants were evidently a curious people, for they built their harbours on dry land.

A splendid harbour, which was to enable ships to come in at all tides, so that passengers might embark or land without the help of small boats, was commenced in 1872, under the direction of Sir John Coode. That harbour was never finished. It was washed away by the force of the tide as fast as it was built, and after an outlay of two hundred thousand pounds, the undertaking was finally abandoned. Little now remains but the memorials of failure, in the shape of an uncompleted breakwater and the ruins of an unfinished pier.

Pretty girls fluctuate in Jersey, both in numbers and merit, much as they do in other places; but as having been the birth-place of Mrs. Langtry, the island claims to have won the prize for beauty. Mrs. Langtry, the only daughter of Dean Le Breton, was born at St. Saviour's Rectory; and was married to Mr. Langtry in St. Saviour's Church, in March, 1874. It was a very quiet wedding, and celebrated at six o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Langtry has been christened the "Jersey Lily," and the name is not inappropriate, for she possesses much of the charm and grace of a flower. She passed all her childhood and early womanhood in Jersey, little dreaming of the notoriety that was waiting for her island home, or of the prominent position she was destined to occupy. In Jersey she lived a simple country life. She walked or rode every day through the innumerable winding lanes, whose banks in the spring are carpeted with primroses and violets, and whose beauties are so little known to the tourist, who follows only the beaten track. When Mrs. Langtry has returned to the island she has again resumed her old habits, passing her time in sitting on the rocks in one of the bays, bathing, boating, or walking.

Jersey has been the birthplace of other celebrities besides Mrs. Langtry. Millais, although not actually born in the island, is of Jersey parentage, and his people are well known there. Oules, the now celebrated portrait-painter, is also a native of Jersey, and his father has lately died at St. Helier. About in the world, it has often been the remark how constantly you meet people be-

longing to or coming from Jersey, and it is a fact. There must be some magnetic attraction about the sunny little island, for people leave it and return to it again—though it may not be till long years after.

Except in the matter of house rent, taxes, spirits and tobacco, Jersey is now allowed to be no cheaper to live in than many other places, and clothing is certainly dearer. No doubt Victoria College has something to say to its popularity, for a first-rate education can be had there for a sum varying from twelve to fourteen pounds a year, according to the age of the boy. A great many young men educated at Victoria College have distinguished themselves at the universities, and in both the civil and military services. The parents of boys requiring to be educated can live more comfortably in Jersey than they could in England, and they can keep their children at home. They are not over-ridden by neighbours in a better position than themselves. Very few *nouveaux riches* people with brand new coats-of-arms would select Jersey as a residence. The society is equal, genial and sociable. People dine quietly at each other's houses, play tennis, arrange picnics, give dances, and enjoy life more, because of that absence of formality and stiffness which exists in England.

The Queen has paid two visits to Jersey. The first was in September of the year 1846; St. Helier was decorated and *en fête*. The ladies of the island assembled on the pier and strewed flowers; the States and Militia delivered addresses. The royal party drove about the island, visiting Mont Orgueil Castle and other places of interest. Her second visit was in the year 1859. In commemoration of her first visit Victoria College had meanwhile been built, and she was shown over it by Dr. Henderson, the present Dean of Carlisle, who was then the head master. As the Queen's coming to Jersey at all had been very uncertain, no preparations were made. The principal livery-stable keeper in the town hastily lined one of his carriages with white cambric, and in this conveyance she drove to the college and again visited different parts of the island, returning late in the afternoon on board the "Victoria and Albert."

The poor people in the country parishes were much disappointed when they were told it was the Queen they had seen. "Where was her crown," they asked, and "her ermine robes?" A queen looking like other people was an impossibility to their simple minds.

One thing much to be regretted in Jersey is the want of proper accommodation for visitors, and it would be worth while for an enterprising company to start a good hotel. A monster hotel has already been built, but it was badly managed, so never succeeded. It is now occupied by a large body of Jesuits, who took refuge in Jersey when turned out of France. There was a good deal of distrust about the wisdom of sheltering these same Jesuits, but

they proved a quiet, peaceable body of men, and have lived down their calumniators, though even now, among the ignorant, a report is still current that a subterranean passage connects the home of the Jesuits with the retreat of the nuns.

I must not end this little sketch of Jersey without mentioning the cabbage walking-stick, which may not inappropriately be called a feature of the island. In childhood we listen with eager interest to the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk," of how Jack put a bean into the ground and forthwith a stem grew till it passed out of sight. Now a Jersey cabbage does something nearly as wonderful. A particular seed grows a cabbage that attains a height of often ten feet. The cabbage, mounted on the top of this long pole, is simply a ridiculous object. It is not, however, for the cabbage that the seed is grown, but for the stalk. During the winter months the saving and thrifty Jersey man prepares these attractions for the tourist market. They are rubbed, varnished, topped and tipped, and when July and August come, displayed in tempting bundles at the shop doors. No genuine tourist leaves the island without carrying away with him at least one of these trophies. He is to be seen brandishing it as he drives round the island in a four-horse *char-à-banc*, very possibly his hat with the white puggaree hoisted on the top of it, as in the hilarity of his spirits he shouts a popular song or treats the passer-by to a personal joke.

When his visit to the island is over, and his funds not having held out sufficiently long to enable him to hire a conveyance, he is to be met hurrying down to the pier to catch the steamer, carrying his own portmanteau with one hand and grasping a bundle of cabbage walking-sticks with the other. These sticks are intended for presents and *souvenirs*, and are regarded as the alpenstock of the Channel Islands.

C. M. HAWKSFORD.

WAS IT A DREAM?

THE glittering gleeds were glowing on the hearth
As slowly closing my day-wearied eyes,
I sat alone. Nor was my calm uncalmed
By noisy pattering of children's feet, for they
Were tended then by Nature's sweetest nurse,
Progenitrix of visions pure and fresh
For the approaching morrow. They were
Asleep. In the serenity of my half-sleep
Kind Fancy visioned a most transient light,
Reflected from emblazoned golden steps,
Extending high above the ethereal realm,
And seemed to lead where jewel-garnished gates
Swung open to the pavements brighter still,
On which were passing, clothed in dazzling white,
Rare forms of men and women. These, clust'ring near
The massive gates, now fill the radiant steps;
Then some descended, and my vision brought
Down to the step on which I seemed to lie,
A form, clothed as with draperies of light.
Such joyous ecstasy now filled my soul,
That, tongue-bound, gazing, listening reverently,
I heard a voice, toned, as by angel hands
On agate anvils with a sledge of gold,

“Dear soul,

“Mourn not for me, for thou would'st mourn in vain;
Grieve not for me, for thy grief is my pain;
But for thy tears, my bliss could have no stain.

“My bliss is greater than thou deem'st could be,
Therefore rejoice in my felicity,
Watching our dear ones, clothed in purity.”

The voice was softened, and the erstwhile steps
Seemed to be gathered through the blazoned gates,
As now an angel host sweeps from the height
With snow-white wings, dropping a silver dew
Which hid the Golden City from my sight.
Lost in adoring, with a quickened joy
Filling my heart, I strove again to see
The form of her whose soul had late
Been freed from its most finely-sculptured mould,
But all in vain. The shimmering halo breaks,
The vision leaves my soul wrapt in a joy
Of too full complement.

The hearth is lone.
Rousing myself from this too happy dream,
I could have prayed, that, but for those
Watched by the vision with a mother's care,
I might again ascend the golden steps
Now fading, veil'd by falling silver dew.

H. CATTERSON-SMITH.

JOHN MADDISON MORTON.

THE present generation is familiar enough with "Box and Cox," that best and brightest of good old English farces, and hundreds of other plays of the same kind, that were written years ago by one of the driest of humorists and most genial of gentlemen; but few young playgoers, I take it, are aware how much the stage owes to John Maddison Morton. Of the form and features of one of the most prolific writers for the stage, I believe many of my own contemporaries to be absolutely ignorant. They know little of his antecedents or history, and yet they, and their fathers before them, have laughed right merrily over the quips and cranks, the quaint turns of expression, the odd freaks of humour that distinguished a writer of fun belonging to the old school. No one has ever filled the place left vacant by John Maddison Morton. Managers for many years past have assumed that the public does not want farces, and are content to tolerate badly-acted rubbish before the play of the evening begins. But a strong reaction is setting in. The pit, and gallery, are not content any longer to remain open-mouthed, whilst the scenes of the play of the evening are being set, or to be deluded into applauding the silly stuff that is nowadays served up as farce, and in which the principal actors and actresses do not condescend to appear. Why, when I first began to consider myself a regular playgoer, some five-and-twenty years ago, when I struggled with the young men of my time into the pit, I could see, quite irrespective of the play of the evening, Webster at the Adelphi in "One Touch of Nature," say at seven o'clock in the evening; Toole and Paul Bedford and Selby and Billington and Bob Romer, always in some favourite farce that began or ended the evening's amusement, at the Haymarket; Buckstone, old Rogers, and Chippendale in such plays as "The Rough Diamond" at the Haymarket, with an after-farce for Compton, Howe, and Walter Gordon; and at the Strand such excellent little plays as "Short and Sweet" or the "Fair Encounter," in which we were sure to find Jemmy Rogers and Johnnie Clarke, and most probably Belford, Marie Wilton, Fanny Josephs, and Miss Swanborough. In those days artists were not above their business, which was and ever should be to amuse the public; they were not taken up and patronized by society; they did not lecture their audiences, but were modest, hard-working, and unassuming. There were no young fops in the ranks of the dramatic profession with extravagant salaries and

diminutive talent, and the young ladies who adopted the profession had to work, and work hard, in order to obtain a name. Farces were then well acted, for the simple reason that the best members of the company played in them. It was worth paying for the pit at half or full price when Robson was set down for "Retained for the Defence" or "Boots at the Swan," and when Leigh Murray, most accomplished of comedians, appeared in "His First Champagne."

John Maddison Morton was born on January 3, 1811, at the lovely Thameside village of Pangbourne, above Reading. His father was the famous dramatist Thomas Morton, author of "Speed the Plough," "Town and Country," "The Way to get Married," "Secrets worth Knowing," "Cure for the Heartache," "School of Reform," &c., &c. The elder Morton resided at Pangbourne for thirty-five years, and only removed to London in 1828. It must have been on the lovely reaches, backwaters, and weirs of the lovely Thames that the future author of "Box and Cox" acquired such a love of angling, and became so enthusiastic and excellent a fisherman. A few years ago I was in the habit of meeting Maddison Morton at the hospitable table of my old friend Robert Reece. They were both members of the old Dramatic Authors' Society, and on committee days Reece would bring the jovial dramatist home to dinner, when over a glass of old port wine, and with frequent intervals of snuff-taking, he would delight us with stories of actors, and many adventures with the rod and line. In fact, he told us that he devoted the best part of his after-life to two principal objects, "Fishing and Farce-Writing."

But to return to his younger days. He was educated in Paris and Germany from 1817 to 1820. After that he went to school at Islington for a short time, and from 1820 to 1827 we find the future dramatist at Dr. Richardson's celebrated seminary at Clapham. Under the roof of the famous author of the English dictionary he found, and soon took for companions, Julian Young, Charles James Mathews, John Kemble, Henry Kemble, John Liston, Dick Tattersall, young Terry, son of Terry the actor, whose widow subsequently married the lexicographer, Dr. Richardson. In 1832 Maddison Morton was appointed to a clerkship in Chelsea Hospital by Lord John Russell, but he did not appear to relish the desk any more than his subsequent friends, W. S. Gilbert and Robert Reece. He did not wait patiently for a pension, like Tom Taylor, Anthony Trollope, &c., but got sick of government office work in 1840, when he resigned his situation.

It was in April, 1835, that Maddison Morton produced his first farce, at the little theatre in Tottenham Street, destined afterwards to flourish as the Prince of Wales Theatre, and to be the nursery of Robertsonian comedy. The farce was called "My First Fit of the Gout," and the principal parts were played by

Wrench, Morris Barrett, and Mrs. Nisbett. As I have said before, Maddison Morton lived in the happy days when farces were popular, when programmes were ample, and when actors were not ashamed of their work. Amongst the cultivated artists who have played in Maddison Morton's farces are the elder Farren, Liston, Keeley, Buckstone, Wright, Compton, Harley, Robson, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Stirling, Charles Mathews, and many more of our own day, such as Toole, Howe, &c., &c.

I once asked Maddison Morton some particulars concerning his subsequent career as a dramatist, when he observed quaintly enough, "My dear boy, it would never do for me to blow my own trumpet. In the first place, I haven't got one, and I am sure I I could not blow it if I had." It is sometimes brought as a charge against Maddison Morton that his plays are taken from the French, and as such are devoid of original merit. But how little such as these understand Maddison Morton or his incomparable style. He may have borrowed his plots from France, but what trace of French writing is to be found in the immortal "Box and Cox," or "Woodcock's Little Game"? "Box and Cox" is taken from two French farces, one called "Frisette," and the other "Une Chambre à Deux Lits," but the writing of the farce as much belongs to the man, and is as distinctly original and personal to him as anything ever said or written by Henry James Byron. For my own poor part, I consider that Maddison Morton is funnier than any writer for the stage in his day. It is the kind of dry, sententious humour that tickles one far more than the extravagances, the puns, and the strained tomfooleries of the modern writer of burlesque, the very burlesque that Maddison Morton considers was the death-blow to the old-fashioned English farce. Players may yet find it profitable to revive the taste for short farces, and they need not hesitate to do so, because several excellent and funny plays by the author of "Box and Cox," remain unused. Benjamin Webster told Maddison Morton, not long before his death, that he had made more money by farces than by any other description of drama. This is not difficult to account for. The author was certainly not overpaid; the farces were evidently well acted; it cost next to nothing to produce them, and if successful the world and his wife went to see them.

Writing to a friend the other day, Maddison Morton observes:—"The introduction of 'Burlesque' gave the first 'knock-down blow' to the old-fashioned farce. I hoped against hope that its popularity would return, and that some employment might still be found for my pen. I was disappointed, and as the only means of discharging liabilities which I had in the meantime unavoidably contracted, I was compelled to part with my copyrights, the accumulation of a life's laborious and not unsuccessful work."

It is interesting to note that Maddison Morton's "Box and Cox" was the pioneer of the movement that resulted in the literary

and musical partnership of Gilbert and Sullivan. If it had not been for Burnand's "Cox and Box" in all probability the "Sorcerer" and the rest of the operas would never have been written. And happily the reign of Maddison Morton is not yet over. On Monday, 7th December, 1885, was produced at Toole's Theatre a three-act farce called "Going It," that kept the house in a continual roar of laughter. It is in the old vein, bright, witty, and bristling with verbal quip. When the farce was over the call for "author" was raised but no one imagined that it would be responded to. But to the surprise of all Mr. Toole led on an elderly gentleman of the old school, prim, neat, well set up and rosy-cheeked as a winter apple. This was Maddison Morton. At last the young playgoer had seen the author of "Box and Cox."

In the year 1881, on the nomination of Her Majesty, this great and accomplished gentleman, who never mixed in Bohemian or literary society, was appointed a "poor brother of the Charter House." Who that has read Thackeray is not familiar with the fine old Hospital of "Greyfriars," and its pleasant old "coddle" under whose shadow and in whose society Colonel Newcome breathed his last, and said "Adsum." Here in this pleasant retreat, quiet and retired although in the heart of the busiest part of the city, Maddison Morton met another 'Brother' John A. Heraud, a dramatist and dramatic critic who had often sat in judgment on Morton's plays. What chats about old times they must have, within those venerable walls that circle round the poet-dramatist and the dramatic farce-writer. "Here," writes Maddison Morton in his well-known cheerful and contented frame of mind, "I shall doubtless spend the short time I may have to live, and then be laid in the quiet little churchyard at Bow—not, I hope, entirely 'unwept, unhonoured, nor unsung.'"

Good, kindly, gentle heart, thus to speak, with such fervour and such faith, in the long evening of your days! Shut up in your cloistered home, the hearts of those who had the honour and pleasure of knowing you often go out to you! And on the stage the laughter evoked by your fanciful wit, and the true humour that sprang from your merry heart, will soothe you and delight many more who honour your excellent name.

CLEMENT SCOTT.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED.

COMEDIETTA.

By JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Author of "Box and Cox."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

COLONEL CHALLENGER.

HARRY BARTON.

BASIL ROYSTON.

MRS. TEMPLETON.

JULIA TEMPLETON } (her nieces).

JOSEPHINE TEMPLETON }

SCENE.—Mrs. Templeton's Villa at Roehampton.

SCENE.—*Handsomely-furnished apartments, large French window at C. looking on a garden. Doors R. H. and L. H. At R. H. a table, on which is an open album. At L. C. another table covered with papers, &c.; table, sofa, chairs, &c.*

Enter MRS. TEMPLETON *at C.*, followed by COLONEL CHALLENGER.

COL. Cousin Martha, you are wrong, wrong, wrong! a thousand times wrong!

MRS. T. Cousin Samuel, I'm right, right, right! *ten* thousand times right!

COL. (*aside*). Obstinate old woman!

MRS. T. (*aside*). Pig-headed old man!

COL. What possible reason can you have for setting your face against Josephine's getting married? It's downright tyranny! Call yourself an aunt, indeed!

MRS. T. My reason is a very simple one. Her elder sister, Julia, must find a husband first.

COL. First come, first served—eh? Really, my dear Martha, I must say that, for a sensible woman, you are by many degrees the most prejudiced, the most self-willed, the most——

MRS. T. Of course I am! But you know very well that when I once *do* make up my mind to anything——

COL. You stick to it like a fly to a "catch-'em-alive-oh."

MRS. T. I don't choose that Julia should suffer what *I* did! *I* had a sister, Dorothy Jane, four years my junior, who married before I did. Do you think that was pleasant? who supplied me with a sprinkling of nephews and nieces before *I* had a husband. Do you think *that* was pleasant? who gave garden

parties, balls, concerts, to which all the world flocked, and surrounded her with flattery, adulation, whilst *I* was neglected, extinguished, regularly snuffed out. Do you think *that* was pleasant? Well, it is *this* humiliation that I am determined to spare Julia.

COL. Well, you didn't lose much by waiting. I'm sure Tom Templeton was as good a creature as ever breathed—didn't live long, poor fellow, but cut up remarkably well considering.

MRS. T. Leaving his two nieces, his brother's children, to my charge, with ten thousand pounds each.

COL. As a wedding portion, which, I must say, you didn't seem in a hurry to part with.

MRS. T. You know my conditions. You have only to find a husband for Julia.

COL. I? When she refused half the good-looking fellows within ten miles round! If she *does* mean to marry, she takes her time about it, that I will say; it never seems to occur to her that she's keeping her poor sister out in the cold!

MRS. T. You may be mistaken, cousin. I spoke to Julia only yesterday, and she expressed herself in terms which convinced me that, were she to receive a suitable offer—

COL. She'd accept it? Well, I'm glad she's coming to her senses at last; and I shall go away all the more comfortable in my mind.

MRS. T. Go away?

COL. Yes. I'm off back again to Cheltenham. Touch of gout—liver queer; besides, my work here is done. Your husband's affairs, which I confess appeared to me at first sight to be in a state of hopeless confusion, are now clearly and satisfactorily arranged, thanks to my young colleague, Harry Barton, who, I must say, worked like a nigger over them. By-the-bye, he's another victim to Miss Julia's caprice and fastidiousness—she actually snubbed the poor fellow before she'd time even to look at him, much less know him.

MRS. T. Well, you'll confess he bears his disappointment with becoming resignation (*satirically*).

COL. Yes; he's getting used to it, like the eels. He doesn't see the use of crying over spilt milk. By-the-bye, there's another matter of five thousand pounds coming to the girls out of the Hampshire property. But Barton will give you all the particulars.

MRS. T. I'm sure, cousin, I feel deeply indebted to you.

COL. Not half as much as you *ought* to feel to Tom Barton. Hasn't he been here twice a week for the last month, up to his elbows in leases, loans, mortgages, and the deuce knows what? Oh! here he comes.

Enter HARRY BARTON at c., a roll of papers under his arm, a lawyer's blue bag in his hand, which he deposits on chair.

BART. (*bowing to MRS. TEMPLETON*). Your servant, madam

(to COLONEL). Ah! my dear colonel, I hope you're well. But perhaps I ought to apologize for entering unannounced. You may be engaged?

MRS. T. Not at all. I am aware, Mr. Barton, how deeply I am in your debt; but now that the business which served as your first introduction here is satisfactorily concluded, pray remember my house is open to you as before (BARTON bows). You will kindly excuse me now—a few orders to give (*curtseys and exit L. H.; at the same moment the door at R. H. slowly opens and JOSEPHINE peeps in*).

JOSEPHINE. Is the coast clear? (*watching MRS. TEMPLETON as she goes out*). She's gone at last! (*runs in*).

BART. (*meeting her*). Jo, dear Jo (*taking her hand, which he is about to kiss*).

JOSEPHINE. Wait a minute! (*looking after MRS. TEMPLETON*). She's quite disappeared; now you may! (*holding out her hand to BARTON, who kisses it*). And now (*turning to COLONEL*), you dear, good, kind old uncle. Uncle is it, or cousin? I never know which.

COL. Don't you? It's simple enough. Your mother's elder brother's second—never mind. Call me uncle.

JOSEPHINE. Well? Have you spoken to Aunt Martha?

BART. Yes. Have you broken the ice?

COL. Cracked it, that's all!

JOSEPHINE. And what was the result? Did she consent or not?

BART. Did she say yes or no?

JOSEPHINE. Why don't you speak? (*impatiently*).

BART. Why don't you say something? (*ditto*).

COL. How the deuce can I, when you won't let me get in a word edgeways? Well, then, my poor young friends, sorry I've no good news for you; the old story over again—Miss Julia stops the way.

BART. And yet Mrs. Templeton's pressing invitation to me to visit at her house—

COL. Is easily explained. She doesn't even suspect that your affections have been transferred from her elder to her younger niece.

JOSEPHINE. Then you should have told her—then there would have been an explosion!

COL. Yes! which would have blown Master Harry clean out of the street door! No, no! don't despair; Julia will find a husband—sooner or later!

JOSEPHINE. Sooner or later? But what am I to do in the meantime?

BART. Yes! what are *we* to do in the meantime?

JOSEPHINE. I'm sure she's had plenty of offers; but one was too young—another was too old—one was too rich—another wasn't rich enough; even poor Harry here, though he followed

her about like her shadow, and I'm sure made himself sufficiently ridiculous—even *he* wasn't good enough for her ladyship! It's downright absurd being so particular. I'm sure *I* wasn't!

BART. No, dear Jo! *you* took pity on me at once.

JOSEPHINE. No, not *quite* at once. I didn't *jump* at you. But what—what is to be done?

COL. Have patience!

JOSEPHINE. Patience? *Haven't* I been patient for the last five weeks?

BART. Five weeks and three days!

JOSEPHINE. Five weeks and three days! (*suddenly*). Oh! such an idea! such a capital notion! Listen! Julia must find a husband, or a husband must be found for Julia!—that's a settled point.

COL. } (*together*). Quite so!

JOSEPHINE. Well, then, as she sets her face against a *young* one—

COL. Yes! as she sets her face against a young one—

JOSEPHINE. And turns up her nose at a handsome one—

COL. And turns up her nose at a handsome one—

JOSEPHINE. She might find *you* more to her taste! (*to COLONEL*).

COL. She might find me more to her—(*seeing JOSEPHINE laughing*). So, Miss Saucy one, you're poking fun at me, are you? Then you'll be good enough to find another victim, I mean another admirer, for Miss Julia! Egad, I must make haste and pack up or I shall lose my train! Come along with me, little one! Good-bye, Barton! Keep up your spirits! Recollect you've still got *me*!

JOSEPHINE. And *me*, Harry! Not yet, but you *will*!

[*Exeunt COLONEL and JOSEPHINE at door R. H.*]

BART. Dear Josephine! What a contrast to her cold, insensible, apathetic sister! I, who loved her so sincerely, so devotedly, made such a thorough spooney of myself! and was even weak enough to believe I was not quite indifferent to her! I confess I felt hurt—considerably hurt—infernally hurt; but if she flattered herself I should be inconsolable, she never was more mistaken in her life! She little dreamt how soon I should find a cure for my infatuation in the charms of her angelic sister! Dear Josephine! And to think there's no hope of my calling her mine till we find somebody to call her sister *his*! By-the-bye, here are a few papers I must look over (*seating himself at table and opening papers*).

ROYS. (*heard without*). Very well; take my card to Mrs. Templeton. I'll wait. I'm in no hurry!

BART. Hey day? who have we here?

Enter BASIL ROYSTON at c.

ROYS. (*coming down—seeing BARTON*). I beg pardon, sir!

BART. (*rising*). Sir—I——

ROYS. Be seated, I beg.

BART. Not till you set me the example! (*pointing to chair—they seat themselves*).

ROYS. Like me, sir, you are doubtless waiting to see Mrs. Templeton?

BART. No, sir!

ROYS. Oh! One of the family, perhaps? Possibly a friend?

BART. Yes, sir, a friend! (*aside*). He's very inquisitive!

ROYS. (*looking at album*). What charming water-colours—perfect gems!

BART. They are the work of Mrs. Templeton's elder niece. Are you an artist?

ROYS. No, merely an amateur. And you?

BART. A humble member of the legal profession.

ROYS. A lawyer—eh? (*aside*). By Jove! here's a chance for me! I've half a mind to—he looks the very picture of good nature, and six and eightpence won't ruin me! (*aloud*). Might I venture, sir, on so very slight an acquaintance, to solicit your professional opinion? (*BARTON bows*). It is rather a delicate subject, a very peculiar subject.

BART. I'm all attention, sir! merely observing that the sooner you begin——

ROYST. The sooner I shall have done. Exactly. Then I'll come to the point at once. I would ask you whether, in your opinion, a promise of marriage, written under *certain circumstances* and under *certain conditions*, must necessarily be binding?

BART. Such conditions being——

ROYS. First and foremost—that the lady should have her head altered!

BART. (*astonished*). Have her head altered?

ROYS. I mean, have her hair dyed!

BART. Which condition the lady has not complied with?

ROYS. No, sir! It's as red as ever!

BART. Then, sir, I've no hesitation in saying that the promise falls to the ground!

ROYS. Thank you, sir! (*seizing BARTON'S hand and shaking it—aside and sighing*). Poor Sophia!

BART. May I inquire the name of my *new* client? (*smiling*).

ROYS. Royston!

BART. The Roystons of Banbury?

ROYS. Yes, Banbury—where the cakes come from.

BART. I was aware that Mrs. Templeton expected you on a matter of business—a certain sum of money, I believe?

ROYS. Yes, coming to the family from some Hampshire property!

BART. I imagined Mr. Royston was a much older person.

ROYS. I see! You mean Jonathan!

BART. Jonathan?

ROYS. Yes, my brother! the head of the firm! he's twenty years my senior! But as he could not spare the time to come, he sent *me*!

BART. (*aside*). It's worth the trial! decidedly worth it! (*looking aside at ROYSTON*). Young, gentlemanly, sufficiently good-looking, good family! Here goes! (*aloud*). Excuse my candour, but I think I guess your motive in putting the professional question you did just now! *you* are the writer of the promise of marriage, and you are desirous of contracting *another* alliance—eh?

ROYS. I don't care about it, but Jonathan does! (*aside, and sighing again*). Poor Sophia!

BART. Perhaps you have some party in view?

ROYS. No! But I'm on the look-out.

BART. And, no doubt, anxious to succeed?

ROYS. Not particularly—but Jonathan is.

BART. Perhaps that is the object of your visit *here*?

ROYS. Eh? Is there a marriageable young lady here?

BART. Yes!

ROYS. I should like to see her!

BART. Nothing more easy.

ROYS. What age?

BART. Twenty.

ROYS. Any fortune?

BART. Ten thousand!

ROYS. That 'd just suit Jonathan! Pretty?

BART. Charming!

ROYS. That 'd just suit *me*! Egad, suppose I try my luck? I've half a mind!

BART. Have a *whole* one! I've a notion you'll succeed!

ROYS. But I know nobody here!

BART. I beg your pardon! you know *me*!

ROYS. Eh!

BART. Known me for *years* (*with intention*).

ROYS. (*suddenly seeing BARTON'S meaning*). Of course I have!

BART. Ever since we were children!

ROYS. Babies!

BART. We went to the same school together!

ROYS. Of course we did!

BART. At Tunbridge Wells!

ROYS. Yes! At Bagnigge Wells.

BART. And we have been friends ever since!

ROYS. (*enthusiastically*). *Bosom friends*! And you'll really do all you can to serve me?

BART. Of course I will! (*aside*)—and myself at the same time!

ROYS. A thousand thanks, my dear—by-the-bye, what shall I call you?

BART. Harry! And you?

ROYS. Basil! (*grasping BARTON'S hand*). Sophia might scratch your eyes out, but Jonathan will bless you!

BART. Hush! (*seeing MRS. TEMPLETON, who enters at L. H.*).

MRS. T. (*to ROYSTON*). Sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Royston.

ROYS. I am here, madam, as my brother's representative!

MRS. T. I am aware of it. Mr. Barton, allow me to introduce to you—

BART. No necessity for it, madam! Basil is an old friend of mine!

ROYS. Yes, madam! I little thought of meeting an old schoolfellow here! (*shaking BARTON'S hand warmly*). Some years ago now—eh, Tom?

BART. (*aside to him*). Harry!

ROYS. Harry!

MRS. T. So you were schoolfellows—eh?

ROYS. Yes, ma'am! at—Bagnigge Wells!

BART. (*hastily aside to him*). Tunbridge!

ROYS. Of course! Tunbridge!

MRS. T. You must have had some difficulty in recognizing each other?

ROYS. I had!—very *considerable* difficulty, I assure you!

BART. We should have met earlier, no doubt, but for my friend's lengthened absence in Italy (*significantly to ROYSTON*).

ROYS. Yes! Ah! charming country—for those who don't mind the cold! (*on a sign from BARTON*). I mean, the heat!

MRS. T. (*aside and looking at ROYSTON*). Really a vastly agreeable young man!

Enter COLONEL at R. H.

COL. So Royston has arrived, has he? (*seeing BASIL*). Hey day! why, this is Basil—his younger brother!

ROYS. At your service, colonel!

MRS. T. You are acquainted, then?

COL. I was intimate with his mother's family—indeed, I may say I was the means of getting him a nomination to the Blue Coat school.

BART. (*aside*). This is deuced awkward!

MRS. T. The Blue Coat school? I thought you said Tunbridge Wells?

ROYS. (*recollecting*). Yes! that was before—I mean after—

COL. (*aside and suspiciously*). I suspect these young fellows are playing some little game of their own; and, what's more, I can pretty well guess what it is!

MRS. T. (*aside to COLONEL*). As Mr. Royston is an entire stranger to me, may I ask you, Cousin Samuel, what is the opinion you have formed of him?

COL. Oh! a very charming young man indeed! Most respectable family! an ample income already, with great expectations from a couple of aunts and a godmother! A little wild at present, perhaps, but he'll soon settle down when he's *married*! Ah! happy the woman who makes a conquest of such a man! (*aside*). There! now *I'm* in the conspiracy too!

MRS. T. (*to ROYSTON*). Your friend Mr. Barton does not leave here till to-morrow; you, I hope, will also defer your departure till then?

BART. (*quickly to ROYSTON*). Of course you will! Of course he will! (*to MRS. T.*) (*to ROYSTON*). You'll be only too delighted! He'll be only too delighted! (*to MRS. TEMPLETON*).

MRS. T. Ah! here's my niece! (*going up to meet JULIA, who enters at C.*).

ROYS. (*seeing JOSEPHINE, who at the same moment enters at R. H.*). Look! what a charming creature!

BART. No, no! it isn't she! it's the other! look there! (*pointing to JULIA*) There's a figure! there's a symmetry! look at those finely-chiselled features!

ROYS. Yes, yes! but still, in my opinion—(*looking admiringly at JOSEPHINE*)—

BART. Your opinion, indeed! Pshaw! what do you know about it?

JOSEPHINE (*aside to COLONEL and pointing to ROYSTON*). What! has Harry found somebody already?

MRS. T. Julia, my dear, allow me to present Mr. Royston, an old friend of Mr. Barton's! (*JULIA curtsays stiffly to ROYSTON*).

BART. (*to ROYSTON*). There's a curtesy! that's what I call a curtesy!

ROYS. Yes! but, as I said before, of the two I prefer—(*looking at JOSEPHINE*).

BART. You prefer, indeed! Surely I must know better than you! (*to JULIA*). My friend Royston—a distinguished amateur of the fine arts, is in raptures with your sketches, Miss Julia! (*JULIA curtsays stiffly again*).

JOSEPHINE (*to JULIA*). Why don't you thank Mr. Royston, sister?

ROYS. (*aside to BARTON*). Oh! she's the sister—eh?

BART. (*with pretended indifference*). Yes, a little, harmless, insignificant schoolgirl—

ROYS. Still, I repeat, if I had to choose between them—

BART. Pshaw! my dear fellow, if you only knew what nonsense you're talking! (*aside*). Zounds! I hope he isn't going to fall in love with Josephine!

COL. Sorry to interrupt, but my time is precious, and business

must be attended to. Mr. Royston, will you step into the dining-room with your papers? Barton, you'll come too?

JOSEPHINE (*hastily aside to BARTON*). I understand it all, Harry. A very nice young man indeed! and likely to stand a good chance. Don't you think so? Where *did* you pick him up so soon?

BART. Hush! I'll explain everything another time!

[COLONEL and MRS. TEMPLETON *exceunt at R. H., followed by BARTON and ROYSTON. ROYSTON stops, turns, and makes a profound bow to JOSEPHINE. BARTON pushes him out.*]

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). I wonder what she thinks of him? (*aloud*). A very gentlemanly young man, Mr. Royston, don't you think so, Julia?

JULIA (*indifferently*). I scarcely looked at him.

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). That's not very encouraging! (*aloud*). How do you manage to find so many admirers? I can't!

JULIA (*smiling*). Hitherto perhaps I may have had the lion's share of attention, homage, and professed admiration; but *your* turn will come!

JOSEPHINE. It's a long time about it! You are so difficult to please. And poor Mr. Royston, I suppose, will be snubbed like the rest!

JULIA (*reprovingly*). Josephine! surely you don't imagine—

JOSEPHINE. That there is some attraction for him here? Of course I do! It can't be Aunt Martha—nor I! *I'm only a child!* (*with affected humility*).

JULIA. Josephine, you speak as though you were piqued! vexed—I might almost say *envious*!

JOSEPHINE. Envious? I? of what?

JULIA (*sighing*). Of what, indeed! Ah, dear one, the privileges of an elder sister are not so enviable after all! What is often her lot? To be constantly exposed to flattery—adulation from the lips of strangers—compelling her to assume an extreme reserve in order to modify the exaggerated and at times indelicate encomiums of relatives and friends. What is the necessary result? Doubt, distrust, suspicion—nay, even prejudice, oftentimes unjust, against those who profess a desire to please! On this impulse I have acted—an impulse dictated by self-respect and a due sense of my own dignity!

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). What a serious tone! (*aloud*). But just think how cruelly, how unjustly you *may* have acted. And I'm sure, as for Mr. Royston—

JULIA. Mr. Royston again! Silly child!

JOSEPHINE. Child?—Perhaps I could mention a little fact that—that, but I won't! (*aside*). Good-bye to my secret if I did! (*aloud*). Good-bye!

JULIA. Are you going to leave me too?

JOSEPHINE. Haven't I got to write out all the invitations for our ball on the 23rd?

JULIA. Your birthday?—true.

JOSEPHINE. Yes; that is the *professed* reason—but of course it is on *your* account that it is given.

JULIA (*reproachfully*). Josephine!

JOSEPHINE. I know a younger sister's duty, Miss Templeton (*makes a low curtsy and exit L. H.*).

JULIA. Josephine! Sister!—Did she but know how she misjudges me! How heavily I have been punished for that pride, that apparent insensibility, with which she reproaches me! Oh, Harry! Harry! could you but tell how bitterly I have repented. But surely, surely the cruel wicked indifference with which I treated his affection, his devotion, cannot have entirely destroyed them—some *little* spark of the old flame must still remain! Else why is he so constantly here? Why does he still seem to seek my presence? At any rate, he shall see that I am no heartless coquette; and when this Mr. Royston presents himself, as I'm sure he *will*—(*seeing ROYSTON, who enters from R.H.*)—I thought so!

ROYST. (*aside*). She's alone! She's decidedly handsome. Yet, as I said before, there's something about the other, that—that—(*aloud and bowing to JULIA*)—Miss Templeton!

JULIA (*curtseying*). Sir! the business matter in which you are engaged is, I presume, settled?

ROYS. Yes; the signatures alone are required.

JULIA. In that case perhaps I had better—(*about to retire*).

ROYS. One moment, I beg! (*aside*). She's decidedly *very* handsome! Still—I don't know how it is—but there is certainly something about the other, that—that—(*aloud*). Before leaving this house to-morrow, with my new acquaintance—I mean, *my old friend* Barton—

JULIA (*quickly*). Mr. Barton leaves to-morrow?

ROYST. Yes, alas! I say "alas," because one day only is now left for me to admire your physical attractions, your mental accomplishments—

JULIA. Oh, sir! Believe me, my sister is far more accomplished than I am.

ROYS. Far be it from me to deny it. Still, from the highly eulogistic terms in which every one speaks of you—your sister among the first—

JULIA. Ah, sir! Dear Josephine is so amiable, so affectionate, so good, so loving, so angelic—

ROYS. (*aside*). She sticks up for her sister, that I will say! (*aloud*). Still, there are *certain* attractions which we can all judge of by our own eyes.

JULIA (*quickly*). And who can possess them to a greater degree than Josephine? Such exquisite grace—such absolute perfection of form and feature—

ROYS. (*aside*). Her sister again! If we go on at this rate,

we shan't get on very fast! (*aloud*). Allow me to be frank with you, my brother Jonathan—but perhaps you've never heard of Jonathan? Jonathan Royston, of Banbury—where the cakes come from—well, he often reproaches me with being what he calls rather wild, and fast, and flighty——

JULIA. The only fault I find with Josephine, dear child. She is so giddy, so thoughtless, so excitable! What a capital match you'd make! Ha! ha! ha!

ROYS. (*aside*). That's a pretty broad hint! (*aloud*). And he—I mean Jonathan—says that the best thing I could do would be to get married!

JULIA. The very conclusion I have come to about Josephine.

ROYS. (*aside*). It really looks as if she wanted to turn me over to her sister. (*aloud*). And having received the flattering assurance that my pretensions to your hand might possibly not be unsuccessful——

JULIA. From whom, pray? Doubtless, from my aunt.

ROYS. Oh no! From my dear old friend, Barton.

JULIA (*indignantly*). Mr. Barton? He? No, no! I cannot, *will* not believe it!

ROYS. I'm sure he will not deny it—and see, fortunately he's here!

Enter BARTON at door R. H.

BART. Miss Templeton, your presence is required in the drawing-room.

JULIA (*very coldly and seating herself at table*). Presently.

BART. (*aside to ROYSTON*). Well, what news?

ROYS. (*aside*). All right! At least, if it isn't this one, it'll be the other! One of the two!

BART. What do you mean by "the other?"

ROYS. The "little harmless, insignificant schoolgirl," you know!

BART. (*aside*). Confound the fellow!

ROYS. You first put the notion of marriage into my head, and I won't leave this house a bachelor; I'll marry somebody! I leave you together! You'll plead my cause, won't you? And pitch it strong, won't you? I shall be all anxiety to know the result—because if *she* won't have me, I can fall back on the other. Don't you see? (*shaking BARTON'S hand and runs out at C.*)

BART. (*aside and looking at JULIA*). To have to plead the cause of another, when, in spite of me, her presence *will* recall the past, painful, humiliating as it is!

JULIA (*with indifference*). Your friend has left you, Mr. Barton?

BART. He has, *Miss Templeton*; but he has left an advocate to intercede with you on his behalf.

JULIA (*satirically*). A willing and an earnest one, no doubt, who probably has already furnished him with a detailed catalogue of my tastes, habits, pursuits, disposition——

BART. (*aside*). He's been blabbing! (*aloud*). Surely he cannot have betrayed my confidence?

JULIA (*with suppressed anger*). The charge of "betrayal of confidence" should rather be levelled at one who by his intimacy with a family, into which he is admitted on terms of friendship, is enabled to study the characters of its members for the purpose of retailing the result of his observations to others!

BART. I will not affect to misunderstand your reproof. It is true that I spoke of you to Mr. Royston in terms which you fully merit—that I even told him your heart was free.

JULIA. Perfectly, absolutely free! You undertook to be his advocate, with such zeal, such earnestness, one might almost imagine you had some personal interest.

BART. And what if I *had* an interest—a *powerful* interest?

JULIA (*quickly*). Indeed?

BART. Yes. And after the somewhat harsh rejection I met with at your hands—which, no doubt, I fully merited—what greater proof can I give of the esteem in which I still hold you than to confide my secret to you?

JULIA (*starting*). A secret? (*aside*). What can he mean?

BART. That, on the eve of leaving your family, I should feel far less regret could I but indulge in the hope of ever becoming connected with it by a closer tie.

JULIA (*aside and joyfully*). Can it be? Has he forgotten? Forgiven? Can he still care for me? (*aloud*). But why this silence—this want of confidence in me?

BART. Frankly, because we feared you would oppose our wishes, our hopes.

JULIA (*eagerly*). Our hopes? We feared?

BART. Yes! She especially.

JULIA. *She?* Of whom are you speaking? Her name?

BART. Surely I must have mentioned it? Your sister.

JULIA (*starting from her chair*). Josephine!

BART. Yes; rejected by her elder sister, I sought and found solace and consolation in her goodness and sympathy.

JULIA (*with increasing anger*). So! Your frequent visits, your constant presence here, apparently so inconsistent with your "wounded feelings" (*satirically*), are now explained! It was for *her*! And I was to be kept in ignorance, to fancy, to believe, to hope——

BART. (*surprised*). Miss Templeton!

JULIA. I now understand this anxiety to dispose of my hand—this crowd of admirers thrown in my way! What mattered *my* feelings—*my* happiness? I was an obstacle to be removed! (*with increasing excitement*).

BART. I implore you——

JULIA (*stamping her foot*). Silence, sir!

Enter MRS. TEMPLETON hurriedly at R. H.

MRS. T. What is the matter here? Julia! what means this excitement—this agitation? Perhaps you, sir—(to BARTON).

BART. I am as much surprised as yourself, madam! I ventured to confide to Miss Julia my pretensions to the hand of her sister——

MRS. T. (*with a scream*). What? You had the *cruelty*, the *barbarity* to make such an avowal to her elder sister? (*advancing upon BARTON, who retreats*) to lacerate her feelings! to wound her pride!

JULIA. Yes! that's it! to wound my pride!

BART. But really——

MRS. T. Silence, young man! I remember what *my* feelings were when my younger sister was married before me. I was choking, sir! suffocating, sir! I turned positively purple! all sorts of colours, sir! And here is a little pert, forward chit, daring to follow her Aunt Dorothy Jane's example!—but here she comes (*Enter COLONEL from R. H. and JOSEPHINE from L. H.*) So, miss! (*advancing angrily on JOSEPHINE*), a pretty account I've heard of you! To mix yourself up at *your* age in a silly romance—a nonsensical love-intrigue——

COL. (*interfering*). But, my dear Martha——

MRS. T. (*turning sharply on him*). Hold *your* tongue, Cousin Samuel!

JOSEPHINE. But, aunt, if you'll only allow me——

MRS. T. But I *won't* allow you! (to JULIA). Keep up your spirits, poor persecuted victim!

JOSEPHINE. Victim? It seems to me that *I'm* the victim! Just as I thought I was going to be married and settled! (*beginning to sob, COLONEL tries to pacify her*).

MRS. T. Married and settled, indeed! A child—a baby like you! (to BARTON). After what has occurred, sir, you will see that your further presence under this roof——

BART. (*bowing*). I fully understand, madam!

MRS. T. Come, miss (to JOSEPHINE), follow me! (JOSEPHINE *about to speak*). Not a word! It is for *me* to speak, as you'll find I intend to do, and to some purpose. This way! (*making JOSEPHINE pass before her, she and JULIA follow her out at R. H.*)

COL. Wheugh! here's a pretty piece of business!

BART. Not satisfied with rejecting me herself, she carries her prejudice, her hate so far as to——

COL. Hate? nonsense! (*suddenly*). By Jove! I have it!—at least I think I have. What if she should feel a “sneaking kindness” for you after all?

BART. Pshaw!

COL. But what about friend Royston?

BART. Hang friend Royston!

COL. With all my heart; but where the deuce is he?

BART. Waiting somewhere or other to hear the result of my interview with Miss Templeton.

COL. In which you undertook to plead his cause—eh?

BART. Yes; and forgot all about it in my anxiety to plead my own!

COL. What's that? Do you mean to say you confided to her the secret between you and Josephine?

BART. Yes; trusting in her generous nature and her sisterly affection, I certainly *did*!

COL. And a pretty mess you've made of it! Well, I must find Royston and let him know. As for you, as you've received orders to march, the sooner you pack up and pack off the better! (*hurries out at C.*)

(*Door at R. H. opens and JOSEPHINE peeps in.*)

JOSEPHINE. Harry! Are you alone? Quite alone? (*hurries forward*).

BART. Yes. What is it?

JOSEPHINE. Such a discovery! (*in a very mysterious tone*). She's got one!

BART. She? Who?

JOSEPHINE. Julia!

BART. Got one? Got what?

JOSEPHINE. A young man! shut up in a box!

BART. In a box?

JOSEPHINE. Listen! After being well scolded by Aunt Martha, I followed Julia to her room! There she was, with a little open box before her, out of which she took something, looked at it, then pressed her lips to it and gave such a sigh! you might have heard it here! perhaps you did?

BART. Well?

JOSEPHINE. Then Aunt called her and she hurried out of the room, leaving the box on the table; and then—then—somehow or other—here it is! (*producing a small casket*). It looks as if there was a young man inside—I mean a portrait—doesn't it?

BART. You've not opened it? (*eagerly*).

JOSEPHINE. No! That's for Aunt Martha to do!

BART. Surely you would not betray your sister's secret—perhaps her happiness?

JOSEPHINE. Much she cared about *mine*, didn't she? Aunt Martha must and shall see it! (*going, BARTON stops her, the box falls on stage and opens*). There! there! how clumsy you are!

BART. (*picks up the box, and then suddenly starting*). What do I see?

JOSEPHINE. That's what I want to know! it is a portrait, isn't it?

BART. (*confused*). Yes! no! a mere fancy sketch, nothing more! (*taking miniature from box and hastily concealing it in his breast pocket*). Be persuaded by me! replace the box where you found it! (*giving box to her*).

JOSEPHINE. Mayn't I take just one little peep? not that I've an atom of curiosity!

BART. No, no!

JOSEPHINE. Well, if you insist on it.

BART. I do not *insist*, I beg, *implore* of you.

JOSEPHINE. Very well! (*hurries out at R. H.*).

BART. (*watching her out, then taking miniature out and looking at it*). My portrait! and what is written here? (*reading*). "From memory." What am I to think? Can I dare to hope that her indifference was assumed—that she ever loved me—that she loves me still? Can such happiness be mine? Dear, dear Julia. But zounds! what about Josephine? Poor little girl! I can't marry them both! What—what is to be done? (*walking up and down*). Will anybody tell me what's to be done?

(*Enter ROYSTON hurriedly at C.*)

ROYS. (*coming down*). Oh! here you are! I couldn't wait any longer! (*following BARTON up and down*).

BART. (*impatiently*). Don't worry! Don't bother!

ROYS. (*astonished*). Bother! when I want to thank you for introducing me to this charming, amiable family, and to tell you I don't despair of becoming one of it!

BART. What?

ROYS. In a word, I'm in love! There's no mistake about it! Over head and ears in love!

BART. What, sir? you persist in carrying on this absurd, ridiculous joke?

ROYS. Joke?

BART. Yes, sir, I beg to tell you, I'll not allow, I'll not permit you to annoy poor dear Julia—I mean Miss Templeton—with your unwelcome attentions, sir—your absurd importunities, sir!

ROYS. Miss Templeton? My dear fellow, she's nothing whatever to do with it! It's the other! the little one!

BART. (*joyfully*). Josephine?

ROYS. Yes!

BART. My dear fellow! Come to my arms! (*throwing his arms about ROYSTON, who struggles*). I congratulate you! I give you joy! Such a sweet, charming, amiable creature, brimful of talent, overflowing with tenderness. Come to my arms again! (*embracing ROYSTON again*).

ROYS. Then you'll speak for me—eh?

BART. Speak for yourself—here she comes.

(*Enter JOSEPHINE hurriedly at R.*)

JOSEPHINE (*stopping on seeing ROYSTON*). Mr. Royston.

BART. (*aside to ROYSTON*). Now then, speak out! don't be afraid! put on a sentimental look!

ROYS. (*assuming a very lackadaisical look*). This sort of thing! (*aloud*). Miss Josephine—I—I (*aside*). It's very awkward! if I only knew how to begin.

BART. (*aside to him*). Go on!

ROYS. Pardon my frankness, but it has been impossible for me to find myself in your charming society without being captivated—enchanted—by your fascinations, your——

JOSEPHINE (*surprised*). I thought it was my sister who——

ROYS. So it was! but she wouldn't have me! that's why I——

BART. (*hastily aside to him*). No! that won't do!

ROYS. (*shouting*). No! that won't do!

JOSEPHINE (*still more astonished*). And you don't hesitate to address me in this language before——*pointing to BARTON*).

ROYS. Before my friend—my bosom friend—that I went to school with at Bagnigge Wells? Why should I? It is he who encourages me—who tells me to “go on.” You told me to “go on,” didn't you?

JOSEPHINE (*with intention and looking at BARTON*). But has it never occurred to you that you might have a rival?

ROYS. So much the better! I should make it my immediate business to sweep him off the face of the earth!

JOSEPHINE (*to BARTON, in a sarcastic tone*). And you, sir! you can listen with perfect calmness, indifference! have you nothing to say?

ROYS. Yes! have you nothing ——?

BART. (*aside to him*). Hold your tongue! (*aloud and with affected solemnity*). Ah! who can anticipate events? How little do we know what a few hours may bring forth!

ROYS. Yes! how little do we know ——!

BART. (*aside to him again*). Hold your tongue! (*aloud*). In a word, what if circumstances compel me to leave England for a considerable time?

JOSEPHINE. A considerable time?

BART. Yes; for two years at least—possibly more!

JOSEPHINE. Two or three years?

BART. Could I venture to hope that you would submit to such a tax on your goodness—your patience?

JOSEPHINE (*very quickly*). I should think not, indeed!

BART. (*aside*). She doesn't love me! Huzzah! (*aloud*). What course is, then, open to me? One—only one: to sacrifice myself to the happiness of my friend!

ROYS. (*grasping his hand*). Glorious creature!

JOSEPHINE. But what about your own happiness? It isn't likely you could give me up so quietly without some other reason—some other motive!

BART. I have *another* motive, which for your sister's sake you will respect! In a word, that portrait——

JOSEPHINE. In Julia's box? Yes. Well?

BART. Was *mine*! See! (*taking out portrait and showing it*).

JOSEPHINE (*exclaiming*). Yours? It is!

ROYS. Yours? It is!—(*bewildered*.)

JOSEPHINE. Then—then *you* are her young man after all?

ROYS. Yes. You are her young man——

JOSEPHINE. Of course; now I understand. Now I see it all.

ROYS. So do I! No I don't! At least, not *quite*.

Enter COLONEL hurriedly at c.

COL. (*singing as he comes in*). "See, the conquering hero comes." Victory! victory! Everything's settled; and now, my dear young friends (*shaking BARTON'S and JOSEPHINE'S hands*), you can get married as soon as you like.

JOSEPHINE

BART.

ROYS.:

} (*together*). Married?

COL. Yes! I had a devil of a fight for it, but I've carried the day! Aunt Martha consents, Julia consents, everybody consents!

ROYS. I beg your pardon! I don't! (*shouting*). I forbid the bans!

Enter MRS. TEMPLETON, followed by JULIA at R. H.

JULIA (*aside, as she sees BARTON*). Still here!

JOSEPHINE. So, Aunt Martha! you've given your consent? And you too, Julia?

JULIA (*endeavouring to conceal her emotion*). Yes, Josephine, willingly, gladly! Can I be indifferent to your happiness? (*smiling sadly*).

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). How bravely she bears herself! (*aloud*). And yet, just now, you were so indignant, so angry with me?

JULIA. A momentary caprice, an unworthy jealousy! but no more of that. Kiss me, dear sister! (*kissing JOSEPHINE and moves away*).

JOSEPHINE (*aside*). A tear? But you won't suffer long, poor dear martyr! (*suddenly bursting into loud laughter*). Ha! ha! ha! *aside to COLONEL*. Laugh!

COL. (*forcing laugh*). Ha! ha! ha! (*aside*). Laugh!

ROYS. (*very loud*). Ha! ha! ha! (*aside*). I don't know what I'm laughing about.

MRS. T. What is the matter?

JOSEPHINE (*laughing again*). Ha! ha! ha! You don't mean to say you've all been taken in? Did you think we were in earnest all the time? Ha! ha! ha! (*aside to COLONEL*). Laugh!

COL. Ha! ha! ha!

ROYS. (*very loud*). Ha! ha! ha!

MRS. T. (*impatiently*). Josephine, I insist on your explaining this extraordinary behaviour, instantly!

JOSEPH. Nothing so simple. (*to COLONEL and BARTON*). There's no necessity for our carrying on this innocent little *jest* any longer, is there?

MRS. T. Jest?

JOSEPHINE. Yes; this harmless conspiracy to make everybody happy! Julia dear, it was to test your love for me that I pretended to be so very anxious to get married, which I wasn't the least little bit in the world (*with a sly look at ROYSTON*). I mean, I wasn't *then*! My fellow-conspirator, Mr. Barton, fearing that your rejection of him might proceed from a preference for another, joined in the plot, but very unwillingly, for it is you, Julia, you alone, that he has ever loved; you alone that he loves still!

MRS. T. What is it I hear?

BART. The truth, madam! (*to JULIA*). May I hope, or must I endure a second refusal!

JULIA. (*tenderly*). I suffered too much from the first, Harry (*giving her hand to BARTON*).

ROYS. (*aside*). That's *one* couple; but there's room for another (*to Mrs. Templeton*). Madam, I have the honour to solicit the hand of your younger niece, Miss Josephine!

MRS. T. With all my heart, Mr. Royston; that is, unless Josephine objects.

JOSEPHINE (*quickly*). But she doesn't! (*giving her hand to ROYSTON*).

BART. You see, Jonathan will be satisfied after all.

ROYS. Yes. But poor Sophia—(*sighing*).

BART. Hush! (*aside to FANNY, and slipping the portrait into her hand*). You'll put this portrait back in its place.

JOSEPHINE. She won't care to look at it now that she's got the *original*.

CURTAIN.

[For permission to act this piece apply to the Author by letter, to the care of MESSRS. KELLY & Co., 51, Great Queen Street, W.C.]

OXFORD MEMORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY YEARS IN THE CHURCH,"
"AGONY POINT," &c.

NOW-A-DAYS men speak of underhand bowling as "slows." Much of the old bowling might be so called, but Osbaldeston, Brown, Harvey Fellows, Kirwan and, above all, Marcon, were faster than any round bowler I have ever seen. As to Marcon, Henry Grace related to me that in one match he saw a young farmer come in with his bat over his shoulder saying, "Fast as he is, I'll have a crack at him." The first ball that came took his bat clean out of his hand and right through the wicket! So, the old delivery in reality admitted of the greater speed. Still, most of the old bowlers were slow. Budd, Beldham, Lord F. Beauclerc, and Lambert are the names most frequently seen in the old scores, and they were about the pace of Clarke. Clarke spoke of Lambert as a better bowler than himself, as also, he said, was Warsop, of Nottingham. Clarke, aged forty-seven, came forward about 1850, having long lain fallow, as superseded by Lillywhite and his school: and let those who think such a style, at least when brought to perfection, would in these days be hit out of the field, reflect that Pilch, Felix, G. Parr, Mynn, Caffin, and Joe Guy had all tried stepping in and free hitting, and were all obliged to treat his bowling with great care and respect. The Gentlemen had small chance against the Players in Clarke's day.

At Oxford we used to play an annual match with the town, including the Cowley ground bowlers. Once, when good bowling was unsuccessful, they put in Tailor Humphreys to bowl twisting sneaks, and the wickets fell faster than before Hoskings, one of the best of fast bowlers at that time. The old fast bowling required a very straight bat. In 1848-9, when I captained the North of Devon against the South and the Teignbridge club, men worth a hundred an innings in good county matches, we played the old fast bowling against their round, and in two matches we ripped them up for about twenty-five in each innings—four innings for a hundred runs! But our bowling was really good. My friend Cawston once took three middle stumps in one over! Of course this kind of bowling requires a very accurate pitch. Mr. Budd, one of the slows, like Clarke, I have seen pitch as true as possible almost every ball through a long innings. Clarke had naturally, from a crooked arm once fractured, almost too much

break on his balls, and he therefore always chose at Lord's the pavilion end for his balls to break against the hill. With the slope in his favour his break became too great.

With slows a deal of spin for break and an abrupt rise was necessary. Budd once bowled me out by a ball that rose over my shoulder and still fell on the wicket. Slows are still tried in good matches, sometimes very successfully, as with Humphrey, but save Clarke and Budd, who from the first practised nothing else, I have never seen any as accurate as they should be. Clarke for four years was never beaten off. He succeeded, though too old to field his own bowling well. This is indispensable for a slow bowler, "as also is it," said Clarke, "to be able to send in unexpectedly a good fast ball, to defend yourself when men take liberties with you." In my own play I have always thought I had an advantage in being well drilled with underhand bowling first. It necessitates a perfectly straight bat. Few men play quite straight—men remark it at once when a man does play quite straight—a good proof that such play is rather the exception than the rule.

Canon Rawlinson, then at Trinity College, was one of our eleven—a fair long-stop and a most heartbreaking bat. He would block by the hour: his runs must come of themselves. His play reminded me of a man who asked Pilch, "Shall I be out (a vulgar error) if I don't move my bat?" "No, sir, but you'll be out if you do." Many a shooter have I seen bowled which found Rawlinson's bat still unmoved in the block-hole. Still, by the course of time and the mere chances of the game, he was credited, in an M.C.C. match, with twenty-five runs against Bailey and Cobbett, two of the best bowlers of the day. I was once in a match with him, "The Wykehamists against the University," and when I had scored thirty he had scored five; but since if he had the first ball of an over he usually had all the four; he had three times as many balls as I had and ought to have scored not five, but about a hundred.

Charles Wordsworth, of Christchurch, before-named as good at everything, was a brilliant bat—a very free hitter. No University eleven, before or since, could ever have left him out, though in one eleven, in Mr. Mitchell's time, every man was known to be capable of fifty runs in a first-rate match. On the Magdalen ground we used to practise with six wickets along the upper side, facing, at a distance of about sixty yards, six along the lower side. Here we had twelve men batting, and twelve men between the rows bowling—no small number to be for hours daily in danger's way: I wonder they could escape serious blows. Men used to be very careless, but I never saw any accident of much consequence but a great many narrow escapes. A ball, hit fifty yards, once touched my hair.

As to accidents, I asked old Beldham, who played from the

end of the last century, and Caldecourt, who saw more play than any man from the time Beldham left off, and neither had ever seen any serious accident—none, at least, by which a man sustained lasting injury. The most painful was that of a son of Sir George Burrowes, who between the innings of a match at Lord's, was struck on the face from a very fast ball from a catapult which was being tried. Burrowes was about the place where a long-stop would have stood, and the ball bounded up from hard ground. Still, though the doctor feared the sight was gone, two years after he told me that he was little the worse. I can also speak favourably from my own long experience; so accidents must have been very few.

Summers, a good player in the Nottingham eleven, died four days after a blow on the head while batting at Lord's—and he did enough, by a journey to Nottingham, to render fatal any case of concussion. Many a man has been hit much harder than poor Summers, for he had no external mark of injury, but the shock broke a little vessel. This I heard from Alfred Shaw, who kindly watched over him from first to last, but could not persuade him to lie by and obey the doctor. I never heard of any other fatal case among men who played well enough to take care of themselves. But as to "all buts," they are numerous indeed. I have cut a ball for four runs, just shaving the grey head of an elderly gentleman at point—too elderly to be entitled to stand there; and, when I have been one of the twelve practising at Oxford, I have often warned men, and warned them in vain, to look out for my hard left-handed hits.

The worst accidents I have known have been from collision. Mr. Slade, an eminent dentist, had to take the benefit of his own art to replace teeth knocked out while running with another to catch a ball at Lord's. Mynn and Box once came into collision: both were too much hurt to play the Kent and England match of the year—the only match in twenty years played without Mynn. When two men run to catch the same ball, the captain should shout, "Stop, Smith, Jones has it;" but this is never thought of. R. Price, a celebrated Wykehamist, before-mentioned, I saw caught on the chin from the point of the awkwardly-extended bat of his partner while crossing in a run between wickets; his head was forced back so violently he fell senseless, and said a little more would have killed him. I knew a fatal case in a parish match—the batsman hit on the head by a long throw-in: I wonder more accidents do not occur in this way especially. Mr. Blackman, last year in a Sussex match, was hit hard by a pelt into wicket-keeper. He only rubbed his head, and directly went on playing; "too giddy to play," he said, and was soon out: but as good as ever for the rest of the match. There are few blows so hard that some heads cannot stand, and few blows so slight as not in some cases to kill, say, the doctors.

As to the choice of the University eleven, there was as much emulation in being chosen for this honour in my time as there is now; of course there always was, and always will be, a certain clique to prefer their own friends, where the claims of those outside the ring are not too apparent. Few had much chance who were not from Eton, Harrow, or Winchester. There was no Marlborough or Cheltenham college in those days, nor for seven years after. Even Rugby was little known for cricket, and when challenging Eton, Rugby is said to have had the reply: "Harrow we know, and Winchester we know, but who are ye?" The Marylebone match at Oxford, and a return at Lord's, were the only great matches. Remember, there was no railway. This made play between rival clubs very difficult. Posting and hotel expenses for young men still "drawing on the governor" were such that we had to consider the purse as well as the play in choosing an eleven. Generally some elderly gentleman gave a seat in his carriage to the young ones, and billeted them about at his friends' houses. Among these, the Rev. J. Prower, of Purton, was very hospitable. Our Lansdowne eleven was often too strong for his Purton friends, so we accused him of a deep design. Three of us were poisoned by an unwholesome crab at supper, and lay about the grass next day, showing all the hues of a green sickness, with three substitutes in the field—"sick unto death," almost, is the only expression to convey all we suffered from that horrid crab. One incident in that match I cannot forget. Mr. Pratt, starting too eagerly to run, was dodged out by Charlie Sainsbury, more for the fun of the thing than to win the game. Pratt was very discontented with this sharp practice. This discontent is too common, though a man is fairly out by the rules of the game, and by common sense too. "Very long after," said Charlie, "I met our old Purton friend at a match, and I'll be hanged if he didn't pitch into me for that 'put out,' though full twenty years after date!" That a man should make a feint to bowl, and without letting the ball go out of his hand, betray the batsman into a mistake, is childish play, I admit; but that when the batsman tries to take advantage and start too soon, you should not put him out, as by the rules of the game, I never could understand. Still, the practice has often raised a cry of unfair play. I remember a professional player who would have been hooted off the Marylebone ground had not Lord Frederic Beauclerc stood forward, and called out that the man was only playing the strict game, and did perfectly right.

On the Cowley or Magdalen ground we had no pavilion, only a long tent for dinner, under the victualling of a very remarkable man—a man who might have made a fortune at Oxford with common prudence, so popular was he and so well did he understand University men—"old King Cole." Few men will ever forget Cole's portly figure, his watch chain and

seals plumbing a perpendicular clear of his toes, standing before the tent. His fat was disease; about thirty at this time; he died before forty. Cole, though not an educated man like Mr. Randall before mentioned, had, like him, one great characteristic of a gentleman, which consisted in making himself quite at ease with his customers and his customers with him. Cole had decidedly sporting proclivities: he was always ready to make a bet either on a cricket match or on the Derby; and not a few men short of cash found Cole ready to lend. He afterwards kept the "Toy," at Hampton Court, failed and died there. No wonder Cole failed; though he was accused of giving only fifty pounds in cash and thirty pounds in wine for a hundred pound bill, his solicitor told me that was quite liberal for Cole, for he had been doing bills for himself on worse terms still!

Of course Cole was a very important personage in the University: he seemed to think it could hardly go on without him. It was "our eleven" and "our gentlemen" always. He would organize the coach for a race at Henley, or for one to take the eleven to Marylebone, and was to be seen with betting-book and pencil—common in those days—under the Pavilion at Lords. When Oxford played Cambridge in the first match in 1829, Cole met a similar character and equally important supporter on the Cambridge side—boasting in the most confident manner of his side. "Well," said Cole, "you seem to make so certain, but I'd take odds that two of our bats make more in one innings than all your eleven put together." "Done for £10 to £1." Cole won his bet—he was the sharper of the two. If one side scored more than the other, such a bet would frequently be won, for two bats often make most of the runs. Pooley, with the English eleven in New Zealand, enacted the part of the old soldier in a similar way; he betted that he would write against all the names of the twenty-two the scores they would severally make, and that in six cases he would be exactly right. He wrote 0, 0, 0 all the way down; of course there were six "duck's eggs" in this weak side.

I remember Mr. Ward saying, on the occasion of a Marylebone match, "See the progress of Oxford cricket. I used to play eleven of Marylebone against twenty-two of Bullingdon, and now the club must ask the boys for the odds of two professional bowlers on our side." From about this time the best bowlers used to be more hit about at Oxford and Cambridge than by the best elevens all the season after. So much depends on daily practice and on knowing the exact time of your own ground. In Mr. Mitchell's day at Oxford, the same side that scored four hundred at Oxford were down for less than eighty at Lord's. Grundy, at Oxford, on that day could do nothing; he said so true and easy was the ground a machine might be made to swing a bat and score there.

The clergy, as University men, were always strongly represented at cricket. Canon Rowsell, and the Rev. A. D. Wagner, at Cambridge, and the Rev. Emilius Bailey were all distinguished. Bailey made the longest public school score, 150 in an innings. Lyttleton, Garnier, Wright, and Grimstone were named, both of fathers and sons, in Oxford and Cambridge elevens. The late Rev. J. Ward, of Cambridge, was the son of the celebrated Mr. Ward, who scored 265, which was for many years the longest score, but it was against Norfolk, a weak side, with Budd given. Budd told me that Ward was missed an easy catch before he had made thirty.

Cricket at Oxford in my day, 1832-6, was more of a sport and less of a business than it now is. We had no cricket elevens from London to play us, and no Oxford and Cambridge match to select and prepare for—the match, 1829, being played before these annual matches. This was a very expensive match. The tent and table was open to all comers from Cambridge, and Cole's bill was a disagreeable surprise, above £400! Even contests of one college against another were rare; the reason was players were not so numerous. Christchurch used to play the University, but rarely did any other college challenge a rival.

The railway system made quite a revolution in cricket. To bring two elevens together was too difficult and expensive in the days of coaches and posting. Knowing this difficulty I was surprised to find a score (given in my "Cricket Field") of Sheffield against Nottingham, in 1772. How well established must the game have been in the northern counties before such a distance could be covered by an eleven in these days. Still the best cricket was till about 1840 confined to the southern counties. The Marylebone played no less than twenty-two of Nottingham about 1820. In the West of England, from Bath westward, there was not a club worth mentioning till 1824, when the Sidmouth played Teignbridge, just founded, as was the Lansdowne the year after; there was a Stalbridge club in Dorsetshire about the same time, but these were all. Scotland and Ireland had hardly seen cricket.

A FEW words as to how Alma Mater advanced from the humble position of a village dame to her present dignity of the mother of arts and sciences.

Not long after William and his Normans had begun to astonish the rude Saxons with French manners and the French tongue, a number of mere dominies began to congregate at where now is Oxford. A long street, called School Street, stretching from about St. Mary's up to Broad Street, became the seat of learning.

Mere huts, sheds, and garrets at first sufficed for these day-schools. But day-schools soon turned into boarding schools, drawing pupils from beyond walking distance, and were called *aulæ* or halls, some of which still remain, St. Edmund's, the least in reputation in my time, being the oldest, and all the halls being older in some primitive form than any college.

Soon we find the modern division of college men and residents, attached and unattached, under the name of Aularians and Chamberdikyns, or briefly, chums; and even as boarders in some schools now look down on day boys as a cheaper and a cad-dish set, so was it then. This feeling the masters of the halls rather encouraged, desiring a monopoly of all pupils and all teaching; so having formed themselves into a guild or close society, they made their own laws that there should be no chums—no students but those attached to a hall. This rule in time was relaxed a little, and chum ceased to be synonymous with cad.

The chum, not being under the discipline of halls, and under the check of no "gate bills," and fearing no proctors, soon bore deservedly a bad name as a riotous and degraded set. For says Antony Wood (in 1422) "about this same time the university (the guild) made a statute against such as, in the form of scholars, lurk in divers places within the university, who were neither of any hall or under the government of a principal, and by whom the peace of the university was disturbed. The university therefore ordered that all members that took commons in any college or hall should lodge within a hall on pain of imprisonment." The Irish students at this time were spoken of as "Irish beggars, who, in the garb and habit of poor scholars," show the danger of this freedom from college discipline, which this statute would enforce.

These private rules or statutes were in Henry V.'s reign enforced by law.

I spoke of guilds. In early times monopoly was soon voted for the good of their own blessed selves in every trade or calling. "How, otherwise," it was argued, "could people be protected from bad workmen and mere pretenders? For instance, without the honourable guild of leather-sellers, the stitches would give way in the badly-made small clothes, to the great damage both of purse and person."

In the same spirit the halls formed a guild, and combining together, voted themselves a university. In union they found strength, and thus Oxford took root in defiance of all the principles of free trade. When once this university obtained a charter, the Aularians had virtually the law at their back to enforce all their own private rules of licensed teachers, and find degrees or other devices for their own aggrandisement.

Halls existed long before colleges. Years after the time of

their foundation, the colleges took to teaching and boarding as employment too profitable to leave only to the halls, but at first a college was a private retreat for studious men without any pretence of university teaching. But colleges, as we said of Oxford generally, began in a very humble way. "University College," said Jeffreason, "had its beginning in a mean house provided for four masters, and no quadrangle!" Imagine a college, with this part—the quadrangle—left out! Merton was for twenty scholars and three chaplains; Oriel was originally for eleven foundationers; Queen's for a provost and thirteen fellows. But colleges soon took precedence from having early endowments in land, and consequent being honoured with aristocratic connections.

The association of schoolmasters existed about the year 1100, but it was not till the year 1200 that *Universitas* was sanctioned by a royal charter. "Still," says Jeffreason, "as might meant right in these days, the guild would have made short work, *pugnis et fustibus*, of any interloper who was bold enough to trespass on their trade.

As to how simply Oxonians fared in early times, we may judge from this that "Oxford fare" was a by-word for short commons, as we know from the following singular passage:

"My counsel is," said Sir Thomas More to his children after his fall, "that we fall not to the lowest fare first; we will not, therefore, descend to Oxford fare, nor to the fare of 'New Inn,' but we will begin with Lincoln's Inn diet, which, if not able to maintain, we will next year come down to Oxford fare, with which many great, learned ancient fathers and doctors are continually conversant."

As to the halls, New Inn Hall, though, as before related, without one member in very early days, takes rank among the oldest foundations in Oxford, with St. Edmund's, St. Mary's, and St. Alban's. In all social and scholastic respects, the halls differ in nothing from the colleges. Brown, of Christchurch, only shows his ignorance when he affects to look down on Smith, of St. Mary Hall. Aularians are every whit as good as collegians, and it shows great ignorance of the past to regard them as an inferior species of the academic genus.

Oxford was anything but a united or happy family in the fifteenth century. "Meet me with your friends at the 'Beaumont'" was the usual challenge for a fight with fists. The "Bellosite" or the "Beaumont"—Bellosite appositely so called from *bellum* and the wars waged there—was the playground that lay between Balliol and Worcester, and a place still noted by Beaumont Street. In the absence of cricket and boating, of which we read nothing in early times, jumping, racing, quoits and childish school games were in fashion. Feuds, which led to fights, were numerous from the many sects, divisions, and party feelings

of opposing counties and nationalities. The seculars fought the monks, and the monks fought rival brotherhoods; the Celts of Wales warred against the Saxons north of the Humber. When the shires were parcelled into groups, the prejudices of each division was *causa belli* to another.

Though two of a trade can rarely agree, says the proverb, even different trades and professions had their strife. "The old discord," says Antonius, "between the physicians and the lawyers broke out this year again—so dangerous and troublesome that complaints were made to the Archbishop of York." But the Northerners and Southerners were more hostile than even the Scotch and Irish factions. Nay, even academic questions became a cause of contention, and earnest logicians would break heads in defence of a major or a minor premise, and the Nominalists fought the Realists for defending their respective sophistries less by arguments than by knocks.

Antony Wood shows us that tricks on freshmen were known in his day—some two hundred years ago. The freshman was seated in hall; every one around was required to make a jest or say some clever nonsense. If the freshman made a dull speech, they would "kick" him, or with sharp nail give him a rude chuck under the chin. Then came a scene: the cook made pots of "caudle" at his charge, his share of the caudle to be salted if he did not, as usual, pluck off his gown and band and affect the low fellow, and make an amusing speech. These speeches were rarely as good probably as the following specimen by Antony Wood:

"Most Reverend Seniors,—May it please your gravities to admit into your presence a kitten of the Muses, and a mere frog of Helicon, to croak the cataracts of his plumbeous cerebrocity before your sagacious ingenuities. Expect not that I should thunder out demi-cannon words. I will not sublimate nor tonitruate sounds, for my Hippocrene is at the lowest ebb, nor will my brains evaporate into high hyperboles. I have not yet been fed with the pap of Aristotle, nor even sucked the dugs of Alma Mater."

From the following strain in which Wood continues it seems that men "read for the pot" even in those days: "I am not one of the University bloodhounds that seek for preferment, their noses as acute as their ears, that lie *purdue* for places. There are they who esteem a tavern as bad as purgatory, and wine more superstitious than holy water."

The "Oxford Sausage," also published in the middle of the last century, shows much of the manners and customs of the day. Blaggrave, like old John Sheard, was the job master; Glass and Nourse were the surgeons, like Tuckwell and Ogle of my time; Ben Tyrrell, the confectioner, the Tupper of the day; and Nell Bachelor, like old Mother Fletcher, the pie woman, all familiar

names of *Universitas*. Nell Bachelor is immortalized also by the following epitaph from "Oxoniana":

"Here deep in the dust,
The mouldy old crust,
Of Nell Bachelor lately was shoven,
Who was skilled in the arts
Of pies, puddings, and tarts,
And knew every use of the oven.

When she'd lived long enough,
She made her last puff—
A puff by her husband much praised;
Now here she doth lie,
To make a dirt pie,
In hopes that her dust will be raised."

Anything like rough play in my time to compare with Antony Wood's experience was almost unknown, though the *Æsthetics* lately provoked it. There was nothing like *æstheticism* in my day at Oxford. One class of men used to read; the others to shoot, hunt, or row. Even music and drawing were rare, as resources in college. Athleticism stood in the place of *æstheticism*; even the word would have puzzled us. The temper of the times inclined rather to the manly than to the effeminate; though, while aware of the excess to which a love of china or sun-flowers may be carried, I can only greet those expressions of refinement as a taste well suited to qualify the roughness of days gone by.

Excess works its own cure, exciting a spirit against it. So, about ten years since, there was a disturbance at Oxford which was circulated far and wide in the daily papers.

A young *æsthete* had his room wrecked. His furniture and his china, his peacock feathers and his other tomfooleries had been reduced to ruin. It is urged on the other hand that he had so far forgotten himself as to speak disrespectfully of the college boat, and that his punishment was justly deserved. "The controversy," says a writer of the day, "is a very pretty one, and up to this moment it is being most acrimoniously carried on, and on the whole the oarsmen, blunt and soldier-like as is their diction, are getting the best of the dispute. The *Æsthetes* abuse them as *Boeotians*, and call them brutal, stupid, and ill-educated. To this the *Athletes* reply, with some promptitude, that there are more boating men to be found in the first class than are furnished by the *æsthetic* contingent, and one of their number goes so far as to make a very uncomplimentary remark of another kind. The sarcasm is one upon which we need not dwell, but it seems that the *Æsthetes* have gone rather out of their way to provoke it. Amidst all the coarseness and roughness of Oxford there runs a wholesome and manly dislike of everything that is sickly, mean, and effeminate, and there is also a tendency to associate effeminacy with other failings. The suspicion is on the whole not unfounded, and young men who are fond of feathers,

fans, and crockery had perhaps better seek some other place than an Oxford college for the gratification of their peculiar tastes."

It is too little considered that in early times our churches were made use of for secular as well as for religious purposes. Even after the Reformation, which did much to abolish this social use of churches, the Cantabs acted their "Aularia of Plautus" in King's College chapel, converted into a theatre, before Queen Elizabeth. Her Majesty attended service in the morning with Dr. Perore's Latin sermon, and the theatricals in the same place in the evening.

"Before this," says Jeffreason, "churches were places of promenade and jollity, also for warehouses for the farmers' sacks and the merchants' wares, to be safe in days of rapine from thieves and marauders. In short, the nave of the church was the common hall for all public business. Such buildings were too useful and too scarce to be reserved only for Sundays."

Since it is well known that in mediæval days in the nave of a church you might see the farmer's sacks left while service was done in the chancel, we cannot be surprised to hear that college exercises and celebrations were performed at St. Mary's before Archbishop Sheldon in 1664 instructed Sir Christopher Wren to build the Sheldonic Theatre. Strange to say, Evelyn informs us that though Dr. Sheldon had spent £25,000 on the work it was never seen by the benefactor—"my Lord Archbishop told me he never did or ever would see it."

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

AND canst thou pass with quiet mind,
Old Year, to thine ill-doings blind?
Or hast thou straightly charged thine heir,
Faith to renew? Wrongs to repair?
Of woe, or weal, what germs dost leave?
Our hopes are high on New Year's Eve!

The feath'ry snowflakes lightly fall,
And earth and air seem one white pall;
"Beyond these voices" hurrying hence
He cannot speak in his defence;
Soon nothing but a memory,
More or less ancient history!

Twelve on the dial points the hand,
The bells are pealing through the land,
"The New Year's risen," chants the choir,
The son annihilates the sire!
Who viewless takes his flight sublime
A feather from the wing of Time!

THE "EUMENIDES" AT CAMBRIDGE.

MANY, many years ago, in ancient Athens, which loved a joke at the expense of what it held highest and dearest as well as we do nowadays, a play called the "Frogs" was written by that most perfect comedian and unsparing satirist Aristophanes. In that play we are introduced to two great poets, Æschylus and Euripides, who are disputing in the world below as to which had written the best poetry. When, after many tests have been applied, the proposal is made to produce the works of each, Æschylus indignantly exclaims that he will then be the loser, for his works did not die with him like those of Euripides, and therefore he has none to produce.

There is exquisite humour in this passage, and a half-truth too. The works of Euripides did not die, it is true, but may still be found in this upper earth, to the great joy of those who can understand the pathos of

"Our Euripides the human,
With his droppings of warm tears,
And his handlings of things common,
Till they rose to touch the spheres."

As to Æschylus, if any proof were needed that he left his poems behind him, when he departed to the land of shadows, a sufficient one has just been given at Cambridge, where one of his plays, and by no means the most interesting, has drawn crowded audiences to seven performances, and many would-be spectators have applied in vain for admission.

The "Eumenides" of Æschylus is the third play of the trilogy called "Oresteia." All three plays deal with the history of the house of Agamemnon, a story that appears to have had a wonderful fascination for the Greek mind. The Greeks were great believers in heredity. They thought that the sins of the fathers should be visited, to the third and fourth generation. If some ancestor had committed a great crime against the gods, all his descendants were accursed until one of them should expiate the guilt and propitiate the angry powers. Agamemnon came of an ill-starred race. His great-grandfather, Tantalus, who had sat at the table of the gods, had grown insolent and committed crimes that drew on him the terrible punishment by which his name has become immortalized. Pelops, his son, continued the career of crime and

punishment. Agamemnon, after besieging Troy for ten years, was murdered on his return home by his wife Clytemnestra, and this return and murder form the subject of the "Agamemnon," the first of the three plays. The second continues the tragic story. Clytemnestra in her turn is murdered by her son Orestes in revenge for his father's death. This second murder is depicted in the "Choephææ." The "Eumenides" completes the story and ends the tragedy; it brings forgiveness to Orestes and peace to the race. Nay, more, it brings a reconciliation between the ancient gods who reigned before Zeus, the infernal deities who exacted a life for a life, and knew no mercy, and the gentler gods of a later day, who were kind and pitiful to mortals, and fair to look upon.

The "Agamemnon" was acted some years ago by Oxford undergraduates, and was much appreciated by all who saw it. The "Eumenides" does not possess the dramatic force and the powerful situations of the "Agamemnon." When read it is even a trifle dull, which may be attributed to the fact that it is partly written with a purpose, and this purpose one connected with Athenian politics only, to strengthen the waning influence of the "Areopagus."

The Eumenides, or gracious goddesses, as the Greeks, who feared to provoke evil by the use of ill-omened words, preferred to call them, are more commonly known to us by the name of Furies, and we regard them as the Greek personification of conscience which pursues the evil-doer and will not let him rest. It is these Furies that form the chorus of the play, and part of the interest and excitement aroused when it was first announced that this play was to be acted at Cambridge is due to the general wonder as to how fifteen peaceable modern undergraduates would render the part of these weird sisters with snaky locks, who pursue the guilty murderer, with intent, when they have caught him, to suck his blood. The problem was solved, wisely it seems to us, by moderating the horror. Their faces were of a ghastly paleness, it is true, their hair hung down in dishevelled locks, and snakes were wound about their bare arms, but still they were allowed to retain a certain dignity and grandeur which help us to remember that they too were goddesses, and fulfilling a divinely-appointed mission. Indeed, before the play is over we become almost fascinated by these horrible forms, and find that, weird and almost grotesque as they are, they can stir in us that pity and terror which are said to be the very essence of tragedy.

The curtain rises, though to be truly classical it should have fallen, on the terrace before the temple of Apollo at Delphi. The Pythian prophetess enters in the exact garb of a priestess with wreath and fillets, and prologizes in a long speech concerning the genealogy and attributes of Apollo; she then enters the temple, but immediately after returns in horror, for there she has seen Orestes as a suppliant, and the Furies lying in wait for him.

The interior of the temple is next discovered, and here we are introduced to the Furies, asleep and muttering. They lie huddled up in corners of the temple in strange attitudes; and in the centre, turning every now and then a look of scorn at the dark and terrible visitants, stands Apollo. Clad in crimson and gold, his quiver over his shoulder, his bow in his hand, he seems to us a perfect representation of the sun-god,

"The far-darting Apollo."

The part was excellently sustained by Mr. Pollock, of King's. Nothing could have been better than the scornful gaze he turned on the grim figures, or the kind protecting smile with which he regards his suppliant.

At his feet kneels Orestes, and Apollo promises him help. Let him go to Athens, and kneel before the ancient image of Athene; there he shall find deliverance. Orestes departs, conducted by Hermes, and Apollo leaves the scene to the Furies.

Then the ghost of Clytemnestra appears, a majestic form clad in ashen grey, a little too life-like perhaps in some of her gestures, but horrible enough to make us shudder. She rebukes and awakens the Furies, who, when they find that Orestes has escaped, lament as follows:

"Deceived! deceived! deceived!
How shall it be retrieved,
The chase forwasted and the victim reaved?
Cunning and keen the theft,
Leaving us prize-bereft
To vain lamenting.
The net that clipped the booty
Slipped it clean away;
For sleep surprised our duty,
Loosed the prey!"

"What here, what here, false Phœbus?
False and a thief thou art,
Whose youth doth rudely ride
Above our ancient pride.
Mothers may bleed; thy part
Is with the murd'rer, heart
And soul consenting.
Such saving mercy thine,
Such clemency divine!
What dost, false Phœbus, then, what dost thou here?"

And as they sing they descend to the lower stage, where as a chorus they properly belong. Apollo re-enters and bids them depart. They refuse, and at last he challenges them to meet him at Athens, where their right to punish Orestes shall be decided. The curtain then falls on Act I.

Act II. brings us to Athens. Within the temple of Athene on the Acropolis, is seen an archaic wooden statue of the goddess. To this Orestes clings, and prays the goddess for deliverance. Now

enter the Furies one by one, and we begin to feel the horror of the situation as, like hounds, they track the fugitive by the scent of blood. When they perceive him, they call on one another to a terrible binding hymn, which is to bring Orestes into their power.

"Sing, then, the spell,
Sisters of hell;
 Chant him the charm
 Mighty to harm,
 Binding the blood.
 Madding the mood;
Such the music that we make;
Quail, ye sons of men, and quake,
Bow the heart, and bend, and break!
 Nor prayer
 Nor passion heed we, nor despair;
Nor reck of ritual, being no gods of heaven
Or earth, but sundered from such life and rivers,
 Shrouded apart in a marvellous dread,
 A mystery unto quick and dead!"

What the Greek music to this hymn was, we have no means of knowing, but certainly chanted to the accompaniment of Mr. Stanford's music it was most impressive. Before the hymn begins, Orestes, who still kneels before the statue, calls on the real Athene to appear, and at his request she comes.

The entrance of Athene is an important moment in the play. It is she who must at last decide the great question of Orestes' guilt, and determine whether it may ever be right to commit one wrong in revenge for another. To our modern sympathies the Eumenides were distinctly in the right, but we are led at last by the poet to rejoice that the gods do give their forgiveness to the criminal, whom they had urged to sin.

The part of Athene gives little scope for action, and yet the goddess is the central figure in the play. It is necessary, therefore, that the part should be sustained with grace and dignity, and both these qualities were conspicuous in Miss Case's acting. In her long flowing garment, the aegis on her arm, her head crowned by a helmet and plumes, a spear in her hand, she fitly represented the Athene of many a Greek statue. She listens to the woes of Orestes, and to his prayer for mercy, and to the complaints of the Furies, who claim him as their rightful prey since he has committed murder, and punishment must follow sin. And we, much as we hate those horrid snaky creatures, cannot but feel that they are right when they tell us how the good shall go free, and the wrong-doer shall suffer:

"Give to Fear her proper seat.
Still to watch the wanton thought,
Let her sit, as just and meet.
 Sigh and tear,
Wisdom must with these be bought,

If in all the selfish soul
Mixeth ne'er a drop of dread,
How shall man himself control?
Wherewithal shall men be led?"

Act III. brings us to the Areopagus at Athens. Here Orestes is to be tried on a charge of murder, and an Athenian audience is thereby to be impressed with the grandeur and antiquity of the court of Areopagus, which in the time of Æschylus they were beginning to treat without due regard. That was when Athens was growing into a thorough democracy, and the court of Areopagus, a stronghold of aristocracy, was beginning to lose its influence. If its origin could be proved divine, that would go a long way with the god-fearing Athenians. An English audience is impressed rather by the excellence of the scene and grouping, the dignity of Athene as president of the court, and the eager sympathy of the chorus with their leader when she cross-examines the culprit, and extracts from him the confession of guilt. The twelve elders who are to vote sit on either side of Athene. The chief of the chorus questions and accuses Orestes, and he allows his guilt, but pleads the command of the gods. By his side stands Apollo, looking more beautiful even than before, now that he comes as witness and protector. Then a large urn is brought on, the elders one by one drop their votes in it, expectation reaches its height; the lots are counted and prove equal, and Athene gives the casting vote for Orestes. With a cry of thanksgiving, echoed by each one of the audience, Orestes turns to the goddess, and then departs, free from the curse for evermore.

Here ends the story of Orestes, and the tragic tale of the house of Tantalus, and here, too, the play might end, were not the Eumenides really the principal personages in it. They must not depart in wrath, for that would bring evil fortune to Athens, and Athene's task is not done till she has succeeded in conciliating them. Baulked of their prey, they give vent to their wrath in angry songs, accompanied by wild rhythmic dances. With gentle words the goddess tries to propitiate them. They are not beaten, she says, for the votes were equal; they shall not be slighted; let them stay in Athens, and a temple shall be assigned to them, and due honour paid them. It seems strange to us that Athene should desire such visitants in her beloved city, but perhaps even stranger that they at last consent.

Then the music changes from harsh anger and terror to gentle sweetness, as the Furies answer:

"So 'tis well!
Here, O Pallas, will we dwell!
Athens, whose high-honoured steep
Almighty Zeus and Ares keep,
Be ours the sacred citadel;
Pride of heaven, where all combine,
Whom Hellas holds divine,
To shield one common shrine."

Then attendants enter bearing lighted torches, and lead the Furies to their new home, while the play ends with a note of joy and peace.

"Pour the symbol of peace, for our peace is made,
Fate is contented,
Zeus hath assented,
On such pact is our concord stayed."

Strange and weird as this story is, the play holds us spellbound to the last moment, and it is not till we have left the hall and the impression begins to grow dim that we can venture to criticise. The acting was all that could be desired. Mr. Macklin as Orestes was not so fascinating and captivating as when he acted the part of Tecmessa in the "Ajax" three years ago, but then the part of Orestes, always a fugitive and a suppliant, gives less scope for dramatic feeling. Apollo and Athene were all but faultless, and the chief of the chorus deserves high praise. But a play of which the heroes are gods and goddesses lacks human interest, and in spite of the excellent scenery, of the archæological perfection of the arrangements, and the splendid music written for the occasion, we venture to think that this is not the most successful performance hitherto given at Cambridge. Why should not the University attempt the "Antigone," a play so full of dramatic power and human interest? But it is ungrateful to find fault where so much is supplied, and we would rather close with a word of thanks to actors and managers who have done so much to bring before our eyes a notion, however dim, of

"That glory men call Greece."





"And I will make a promise, dears,
That will content you, may be:
I'll love you through the happy years,
Till I'm a nice old lady!"

True love (like yours and mine) they say
Can never think of ceasing,
But year by year, and day by day,
Keeps steadily increasing."

From "A LITTLE GIRL'S FANCIES"

LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1851.

AFTER A STORM COME.

COMEDY IN ONE

BY JOHN MARSH AND MORRIS, Author of "P.

GRANTIS PERSONA.

MAJOR PELICAN.

DOCTOR VICESIMUS PRETTYWELL.

THE SUPPER OF SORROW.

MRS. PELICAN.

MRS. MAJOR PELICAN.

FANNY.

SCENE.—Major Pelican's Villa in St. John's Wood.

SCENE.—A rather homely-furnished Apartment. Enter at C. Ladies R. H. and L. H. a maid at back at M. C.

DOCTOR VICESIMUS PRETTYWELL. (He is covered with a paper in his hand. He looks at it, then at a newspaper open in his hand. Now he looks at the paper, then at the Sporting Intelligence. See it I can't get on like you for the Great Cricklewood Hurdle race. Of course! No indulging in literary pursuits in this time of the young Missus's bell; and she can't bear her waiting. Well, I suppose it's only natural for you to be impatient! *Putting up and putting down the paper.* *Heard to ring.* Now the old man's at it, and she's in a hurry, she is! Well, I suppose old people can't do that. *Opening the door.* R. H.; *bell rings.* L. H.; *bell rings.* R. H.; *then both bells are rung at the same time.* *Do not ring the bells and the bells.*)

Enter MAJOR PELICAN at C.

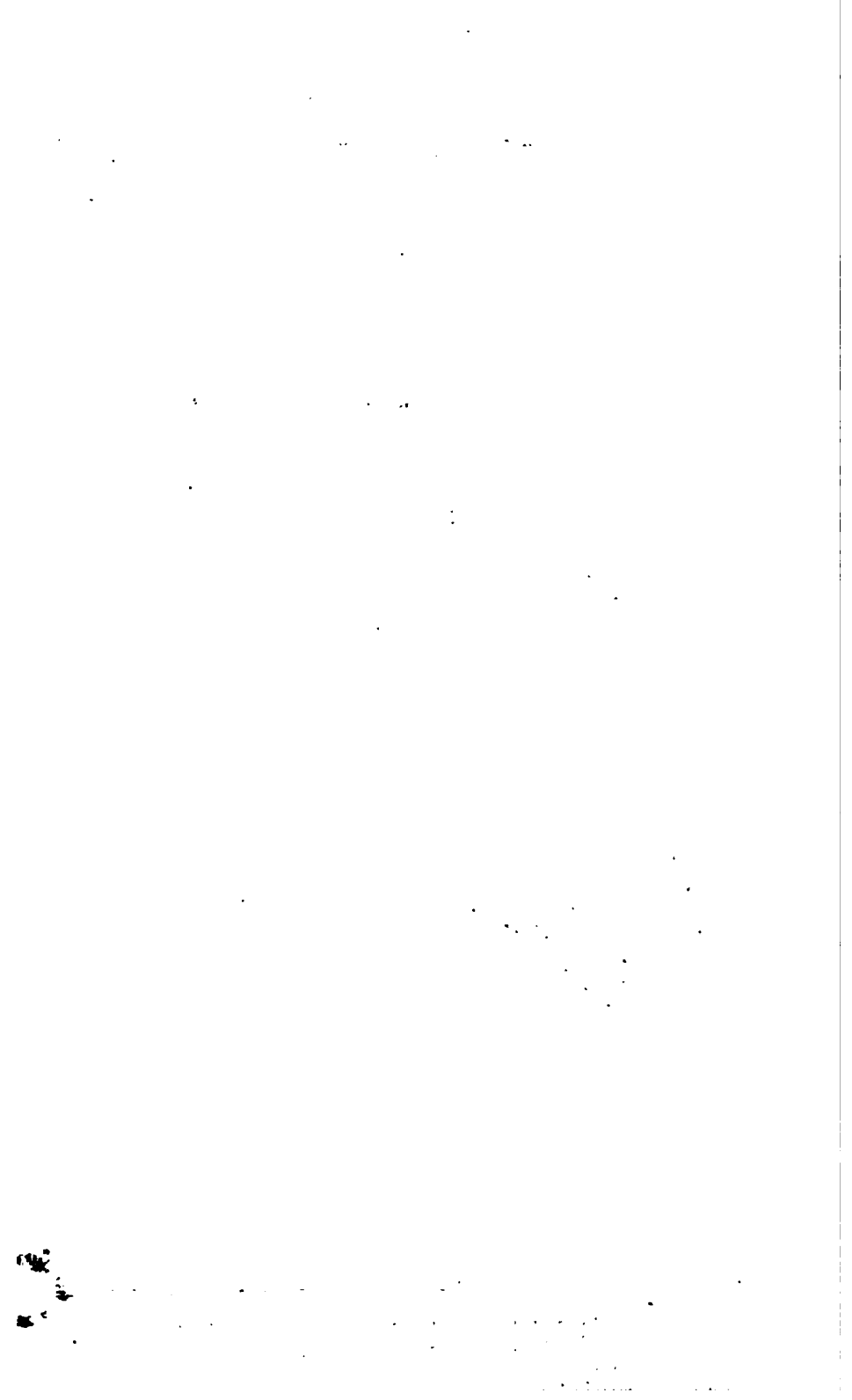
MAJOR. Well, Joseph, don't you hear the bell?

JOSEPH. I hear two of them, sir.

MAJOR. Then why don't you go?

JOSEPH. I don't know which way to go, sir.

MAJOR. (To Joseph, sir) *those both bells are heard to*



LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1886.

AFTER A STORM COMES A CALM!

COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

BY JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Author of "Box & Cox," &c., &c.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MAJOR PELICAN.

DOCTOR VICESIMUS PRETTYWELL.

JOSEPH (*a servant*).

MRS. PELICAN.

MRS. MAJOR PELICAN.

FANNY.

SCENE.—Major Pelican's Villa in St. John's Wood.

SCENE.—*A handsomely-furnished apartment. Door at C., doors R. H. and L. H. a window at back at R. C.*

JOSEPH (*discovered lounging in an easy-chair—his legs upon another—a newspaper open in his hand*). Now then for a quiet squint at the Sporting Intelligence. See if I can't pick out a likely one for the Great Cricklewood Handicap (*bell rings at L. H.*). Of course! No indulging in literary pursuits in this house! That's the young Missus's bell; and she can't bear being kept waiting. Well, I suppose it's only natural for young people to be impatient! (*getting up and going toward L. H.; bell at R. H. is heard to ring*). Now the old lady's at it, and she's always in a hurry, she is! Well, I suppose old people can't afford to wait (*going towards door R. H.; bell at L. H. rings again, then the bell at R. H.; then both bells are rung violently. JOSEPH running backwards and forwards*).

Enter MAJOR PELICAN at C.

MAJOR. Well, Joseph, don't you hear the bell?

JOSEPH. I hear two of them, sir.

MAJOR. Then why don't you go?

JOSEPH. I don't know which way to go, sir! I can't answer both bells at once, sir! (*here both bells are heard to ring again*).

Enter DOCTOR PRETTYWELL *at c.*

JOSEPH (*to MAJOR*). What am I to do, sir?

DOCTOR (*coming down*). Do what you are doing now.

JOSEPH. I ain't doing nothing, sir.

DOCTOR. Then keep on doing nothing! It's about the best thing you *can* do!

JOSEPH. But I shall catch it from *both* my missuses, sir!

DOCTOR. At first perhaps you *will*, but when they find they've both fared alike, they'll each feel secretly flattered by the inattention you show to the other. Go to your work.

JOSEPH. Yes, sir.

Exit at c.

DOCTOR. Well, friend Jeremiah!

MAJOR. Well, friend Vicessimus!

DOCTOR. I seem to have dropped in at rather an unlucky moment; but frankly, if I were to wait till your domestic barometer pointed to "calm and settled" weather, I'm afraid my visits wouldn't be very frequent.

MAJOR. True, my dear doctor.

DOCTOR. I don't know how you manage it, but you generally contrive to have a thunderstorm, more or less violent, rumbling over this house of yours.

MAJOR. True again, and I'll tell you why. Because this "house of mine," as you call it, is constantly exposed to two discordant elements from opposite directions, but invariably coming into contact and exploding *here*!

DOCTOR. I don't exactly understand.

MAJOR. It's very simple. Living here with my mother and my wife, who *both* claim to be "monarch of all they survey," I, the master of the house——

DOCTOR. Find yourself cutting rather a contemptible figure——eh?

MAJOR. Very much so. It would be easy enough to do as Georgina wishes, *or* my mother, but to do as they *both* wish, is impossible, for the simple reason that no two women ever wish the same thing; *consequently* the result is anger on one side, sulky looks on the other, one invokes her title of "mother," the other her privileges of "wife," consequently between the two——

DOCTOR. You come in for more kicks than halfpence?

MAJOR. Considerably more! In fact, *all* kicks.

DOCTOR. And yet I don't know a more charming, amiable person than your excellent mother. I've known and admired her for more than thirty years; in fact, had it depended on me, I might very possibly have been your father.

MAJOR. Thank you. But I'm very well satisfied as I am; besides, the thing couldn't be done now.

DOCTOR. Not conveniently! However, she preferred marrying

the "author of your being," so there was an end of my romance! But to return to these unfortunate domestic quarrels; from what I know of your mother, I'm convinced the fault lies with your wife.

MAJOR. And from what I know of my wife, I'm certain it lies with my mother.

DOCTOR. Then, my good friend, why not at once put an end to these personal and conjugal troubles of yours?

MAJOR. How?

DOCTOR. Simply this. Appoint one of the two contending parties—no matter which—to the sole control of your domestic affairs; support her authority through thick and thin, give her credit for always being right, even when she's wrong, and the thing's done!

MAJOR. A very good plan, I dare say, but unluckily it's impracticable.

DOCTOR. Why?

MAJOR. Because it would require a considerable amount of *pluck* to carry it out, and I haven't got an atom.

DOCTOR. Nonsense! You've only to show a proper spirit.

MAJOR. How can I do that, when I haven't any spirit *at all*?

DOCTOR. Pshaw! Recollect, Nero was a perfect lamb at starting, and yet he fiddled when Rome was burning.

MAJOR. But I'm not a Nero! Besides, I haven't got a fiddle, and I couldn't fiddle if I had.

MRS. P. } (*from rooms R. and L.—together*). Joseph!

MRS. MAJOR. } Joseph!

DOCTOR. Here they both come! Do as I tell you, pluck up a proper spirit; in the meantime I'll beat a retreat (*runs out at C.*).

MAJOR (*shouting after him*). Coward! to leave me alone to the mercy of two exasperated females!

Enter MRS. PELICAN hurriedly at R. H.

MRS. P. This is perfectly intolerable!

MRS. MAJOR. It's absolutely unbearable! (*entering hurriedly at L. H.*).

MRS. P. To take no notice of my bell!

MRS. MAJOR. What's the use of my ringing?

MRS. P. Oh! here you are, son Jeremiah?

MAJOR. Yes, my dear mother (*aside*), and I devoutly wish I was anywhere else!

MRS. P. (*turning him round towards her*). I appeal to you to see that my authority in this house is respected!

MAJOR (*with pretended surprise*). What? Has any one dared—

MRS. MAJOR (*turning him towards her*). I presume you won't allow me to be treated with inattention?

MAJOR (*with pretended surprise again*). What? Has any one presumed—

MRS. P. (*aside to him*). But what's the matter with your wife? She seems out of temper!

MAJOR. Yes! because Joseph didn't attend to her summons at once. When *you* require him, he knows better than do *that*!

MRS. MAJOR (*aside to him*). Your mother appears annoyed at something or other?

MAJOR. No wonder! Joseph didn't answer her bell. He knows better than keep *you* waiting! (*aside*) What a humbug I am!

MRS. P. By-the-bye, Jeremiah, I have ordered dinner an hour later to-day.

MRS. MAJOR. Indeed? and for what reason pray?

MRS. P. Because it suits me.

MAJOR. Oh! of course, my dear Georgina, if it suits her——

MRS. MAJOR. But it doesn't suit *me*. I expect Mr. Simcox, the jeweller, early this evening, and cannot dine later than five.

MAJOR. Oh! of course, my dear mother, if she expects Mr. Simcox——

MRS. P. It's too late now, the dinner will be served at six o'clock.

MRS. MAJOR. I won't give way! It will be on the table at five.

MRS. P. Six!

MRS. MAJOR. Five!

MAJOR (*aside*). There they are again!—hard at it!—hammer and tongs!

Enter JOSEPH running at c.

JOSEPH. Please, ma'am, please, sir, here's Miss Fanny just driven up in a cab from the station!

MRS. P. Fanny!

MAJOR. What can have brought her back?

FANNY (*heard speaking off at c.*). Gently, my good man, with that box—my best hat's in it! Such a beauty too! (*runs in at c.; she is in a light summer travelling costume*). Here I am! How astonished you all look! Ha! ha! ha! (*running to MRS. MAJOR P.*). Dear Georgina! so glad to see you once again (*kissing her*) (*nodding to MAJOR*). How do, brother Jeremiah? and you, dear mamma? (*about to kiss MRS. PELICAN*).

MRS. P. (*stiffly*). I was not aware, miss, that it was usual for a well-educated young lady to address her sister-in-law before her mother!

FANNY. Did I? So sorry, dear mamma. I really didn't see you at first.

MAJOR (*aside*). I'm sure she's big enough!

FANNY (*holding up her face to MRS. P.*). Well mamma? won't you kiss me? (*slily*) You know you're punishing yourself as well as me.

MRS. P. Who can resist the dear child? (*kissing FANNY*). But we thought your visit to your Cheltenham friends was intended to last another week?

FANNY. So it was, but they were obliged to return to town, so they brought me with them, put my luggage into a cab at the station, me on the top—I mean my luggage on the top—and here I am!

Enter JOSEPH at L. H.

JOSEPH. Luncheon is on the table, sir!

MRS. P. Very well, Joseph (*aside to MAJOR*). Don't forget what I said about the dinner.

MAJOR (*aside to her*). All right; six o'clock, sharp!

MRS. MAJOR (*aside to MAJOR*). Remember what I decided about the dinner-hour!

MAJOR (*aside to her*). All right! five o'clock, sharp! (*aside*). Between the two the chances are I shan't get any dinner at all!

(Exeunt MRS. PELICAN and MAJOR at R. H.)

FANNY. I'm so glad we're alone at last, Georgina; we can have a nice long chat together; and I've such a lot to tell you.

MRS. MAJOR. Well? I'm all attention! But first, how did you enjoy your trip to Cheltenham?

FANNY. Not much. I found it rather slow. Nothing but a collection of bilious-looking fogies being wheeled about in Bath chairs. But never mind that; I've something else to talk about!

MRS. MAJOR (*smiling*). Something very serious, no doubt.

FANNY. Awfully serious! Listen! At the very first ball I went to at the Assembly Rooms——

MRS. MAJOR. A very brilliant affair, of course!

FANNY. Really, Georgina, if you keep on interrupting me in this sort of way——

MRS. MAJOR. I beg your pardon! Well?

FANNY. Well, at my very first ball I danced with a gentleman, once or twice—perhaps three or four times.

MRS. MAJOR. Young, of course (*smiling*).

FANNY. Rather!

MRS. MAJOR. Handsome?

FANNY (*very quickly*). Very! Well, judge of my surprise when, the very next morning, as I was sitting in the drawing-room, the door opened and the servant announced "Captain Boodle"!

MRS. MAJOR. The "young gentleman!" (*smiling*).

FANNY. Yes!

MRS. MAJOR. Perhaps you had given him your address?

FANNY (*indignantly*). Not I indeed! He didn't ask for it, or perhaps I might! Well, the next morning he called again, and the following morning, and the morning after that—in short, every morning—and as I was always in the drawing-room, of course quite by accident——

MRS. MAJOR. You naturally became quite intimate—familiar and chatty.

FANNY. *He* didn't! *I* did all the *chatting* part! Never did I

see any one so timid, so bashful, as Boodle. When he *did* try to say something, there he'd stand stammering and stuttering and blushing like a schoolgirl! But although his tongue didn't say much, his *eyes* did!

MRS. MAJOR (*smiling*). And they said, "I love you"?

FANNY. Distinctly! Well, I thought to myself it's not a bit of use going on like this. It's quite evident the poor man worships the very ground I tread upon. So when he called next day and I told him, in *tremulous accents* of course, that I was going away the effect was magical! First he turned pale, then red, then blue; then he let his hat fall, then his umbrella; then himself;—on both his knees, at both my feet, and there I believe he would have remained till further notice, if I hadn't said to him, "Augustus"—his name is Augustus—"I won't pretend to misunderstand you. You love me! I am yours!"

MRS. MAJOR. What? Such an act of thoughtlessness—of indiscretion, on your part?

FANNY. Perhaps it was, but I know this, it quite cured him of his timidity! for when he once *did* begin, I never heard any body's tongue rattle on at such a rate as his did—never!

MRS. MAJOR. And the result, I presume, was——

FANNY. That we both, then and there, exchanged vows of constancy, and locks of hair!—his is rather red, by-the-bye! But I see mamma coming!

MRS. MAJOR. Then I'll retire. Seeing us closeted together would only arouse her ridiculous jealousy.

FANNY. And I'll see if I can't find an opportunity to slip in a word about Augustus. In the meantime you'll keep my secret?

MRS. MAJOR. Religiously! for your sake (*going up*).

FANNY. And Boodle's.

MRS. MAJOR (*turning and smiling*). And Boodle's. [*Exit at c.*]

Enter MRS. PELICAN at R. H.

MRS. P. Oh! here you are, Fanny?

FANNY. Yes, mamma! and quite alone.

MRS. P. Now! But you were *not* alone.

FANNY. No, dear Georgina was with me.

MRS. P. And "dear Georgina," no doubt, lost no opportunity of prejudicing you against your mother!

FANNY. Oh mamma! (*reproachfully*).

MRS. P. But fortunately you will not long be exposed to her pernicious influence.

FANNY. Oh, mamma!

MRS. P. Bring a chair and sit down by me.

FANNY (*sitting down by* MRS. PELICAN's *side—aside*). I wonder what's coming?

MRS. P. I have something serious to say to you, Fanny.

FANNY. So have I to you, mamma—*very* serious!

MRS. P. Indeed? In the meantime, as I happen to be your mother, and you, consequently, happen to be my daughter, perhaps you'll allow me to begin *first*?

FANNY. Certainly.

MRS. P. Then listen. Although you are still very young——

FANNY. Nineteen next birthday, mamma.

MRS. P. Don't interrupt me! Although you are still young, I have been reflecting a good deal lately on that all important subject, your future settlement in life!

FANNY (*quickly*). So have I, mamma! (*aside*). I shall be able to get in a word presently about Augustus!

MRS. P. In other words, don't you consider it high time you thought of matrimony?

FANNY (*very quickly*). I *do*, mamma! I'm always thinking of it!

MRS. P. But of course it isn't likely *you* can have any one in your eye *yet*!

FANNY. I beg your pardon! I *have*!

MRS. P. (*severely*). What's that you say?

FANNY. That is—I mean—of course I haven't! (*aside*). It won't do to say anything about Augustus yet; I must keep him dark!

MRS. P. Then you have no positive antipathy to the married state?

FANNY. I should think not, indeed! (*very quickly*).

MRS. P. (*severely*). My dear! I'm really surprised to hear a well-educated young lady express herself in such—I might almost say indelicate terms. But to return; I need not say I would not encourage any candidate for your hand who was not deserving of you.

FANNY. Of course not, mamma! He *must* be worthy of such a treasure!

MRS. P. Tolerably young and not absolutely ill-looking.

FANNY (*eagerly*). Certainly not! (*aside*). I call Augustus decidedly *good-looking*!

MRS. P. And in the possession of ample means.

FANNY (*aside*). Augustus has got ever so much already, besides two rich maiden aunts and an aged godmother!

MRS. P. All of which qualifications are, fortunately, in the possession of Sir Marmaduke Mangle!

FANNY. Sir Marmaduke Mangle? Lor, mamma, you can't mean that little old man we met at Brighton with a bad cough, a wig, and a canary-coloured complexion?

MRS. P. He's not old by any means, and is only *slightly* canary-coloured after all! However, he has seen you, he admires you, and offers you his hand, his heart, his title, and his fortune!

FANNY. But I don't love *him*, mamma! I never *could* love him—even if I didn't love somebody else!

MRS. P. (*starting*). What's that I hear? You love somebody else?

FANNY. Yes, and one who loves *me*, and one I'm determined to marry or die an old maid. There!

MRS. P. (*angrily*). Silence, miss!

FANNY (*impatiently*). I won't silence! If you think Sir Marmaduke such a very great catch, marry him yourself! I'll consent to it, and give you away into the bargain! It's quite evident you were never in love!

MRS. P. I beg your pardon! I *was*, intensely, with a youthful doctor! (*aside*). Poor Vicesimus! Ah! (*giving a long sigh*). Nevertheless, I married your father—and we were not so *very* unhappy, considering! (*to FANNY, who is about to speak*). Not another word! My mind is made up, so the sooner you make up *yours* to become Lady Mangle the better!

Enter MRS. MAJOR and MAJOR at c., followed by JOSEPH.

MRS. MAJOR. Nothing so simple, Joseph! Tell Mary to put up a bed for Miss Fanny in her mamma's room!

MRS. P. (*sharply*). What's that? Put up a bed in my room?

MRS. MAJOR. Yes! Why not?

MRS. P. Because I won't allow it!

MAJOR (*aside*). There they are at it again!

FANNY. But why can't I have my own snug little room?

MRS. MAJOR. The fact is, I have made a work-room of it for myself; besides, Fanny's proper place is with her mother.

MRS. P. Quite out of the question! The slightest noise disturbs my sleep.

FANNY. But I sleep so very quietly, mamma—you'd scarcely hear me breathe; I don't, and as for snoring——

MRS. P. I won't hear another word.

MAJOR. But, hang it all, Fanny must sleep *somewhere*! She requires a horizontal position as much as other people.

MRS. P. Then let her find one—but not in *my* room!

MRS. MAJOR. I insist on my wishes being carried out.

FANNY (*aside to MAJOR*). Oh brother Jeremiah, if I was only in your place just for five minutes!

MAJOR (*aside*). She's quite right! I'm master here after all, confound it! If I'm *not*, I ought to be; and if I ought to be, I *will* be, confound it! (*aloud, and assuming an authoritative manner*). My patience is exhausted! Anarchy has presided too long over my domestic hearth.

FANNY (*aside to him*). Confound it!

MAJOR. Confound it!

MRS. P. } Quite true!

MRS. MAJOR. }

MAJOR. And henceforth I'm determined to be master of my own house (FANNY *whispers him*). Confound it!

MAJOR. But there must be a mistress as well.

MRS. P. } Of course ! Well (*anxiously*), decide between
MRS. MAJOR. } us.

MAJOR. That's what I'm going to do (*aside*). It's really very awkward ! My mother screams loudest, but my wife screams longest ; besides, I only hear my mother in the day, whereas my wife——

MRS. P. (*to MAJOR*). Well ? which of the two is to be mistress here ?

MRS. MAJOR. Yes, which of the two ?

MAJOR (*after a violent effort*). My wife ! There ! I've said it (*FANNY whispers him*). Confound it !

MRS. P. Ah ! (*screaming and falling into a chair*).

MRS. MAJOR. Come, Major, and as your reward you shall hear me issue my orders in such a style. (*Exit at L. H., (hurrying MAJOR with her, and calling as she goes out.) Joseph ! Mary ! Sophia !*

MRS. P. (*suddenly starting up from her chair*). So ! she—*she's* to be everybody, and I'm to be nobody ! a cypher, a nonentity ! Was there ever such ingratitude ? I, who left my own home to live with them, without even waiting to be asked, to give them the benefit of my experience, to take upon myself the entire control of their domestic affairs—nay, even to carry my maternal affection so far as not to allow either of them to interfere in anything whatever !

FANNY (*aside*). Poor dear mamma ! she doesn't see that's the very reason why everything went wrong

MRS. P. But I'll forget them, I'll renounce them, I'll cast them off, I'll abandon them to their unhappy fate ; and when you're comfortably married, dear, I'll come and live with you (*throwing her arms round FANNY, who tries to speak*). No, thanks, I see you are literally bursting with gratitude ; but I am rewarded already ! I feel it here—here (*striking her breast, then flings her arms round FANNY again and hurries out at R. H.*).

FANNY. Mercy on us ! here's a pretty piece of business ! Live with me when I am married ? Poor Augustus ! he little suspects what a rod there is in pickle for him ! It's all Jeremiah's fault and it's poor little I who am punished.

DOCTOR (*without*). In the parlour, is she ?—very well !

FANNY. Surely that's dear Doctor Prettywell's voice !

Enter DOCTOR at c.

DOCTOR. Ah ! my dear young friend, delighted to see you !

FANNY. Not more than I am to see you, doctor !

DOCTOR. But let me look at you. How we're grown ! I declare we're quite a young woman !

FANNY. Yes, doctor.

DOCTOR. And a very pretty one too !

FANNY. Yes, doctor.

DOCTOR (*looking intently at FANNY*). She's the very image of her mother, as she *was* thirty years ago; the same soft blue eyes, before she took to spectacles, the same fairy form, before it filled out, the same alabaster brow, before the wrinkles set in!

FANNY (*aside*). How earnestly he looks at me! I hope I haven't fascinated *him* as well as Sir Marmaduke! (*suddenly*). Goodness me! what if *he* should be the "youthful doctor" mamma was speaking about? (DOCTOR *looks at her again and gives a loud sigh*.) What a sigh! It must be he. He may still have some lingering affection for her, the flame may not be *quite* burnt out; there may be a tiny spark left which a little gentle *blowing* may rekindle into a blaze. It isn't very likely; still I may as well try what a little "blowing" may do.

DOCTOR. Well, now that your education is completed, and you've come home brimful of accomplishments, of course you'll go into society, and, like other young ladies, pick up a husband?

FANNY (*with affected indifference*). A husband? Not, I indeed! I've never even thought of such a thing! (*Aside*). I had no idea I could fib so well! (*Aloud*). No, doctor! I've too much regard for my own tranquillity, my own peace of mind!

DOCTOR. Hoity toity! Who's been putting such nonsense into your head?

FANNY. Why, you yourself never ventured on matrimony!

DOCTOR. No! because I—I—heigho! (*giving a loud sigh*).

FANNY (*aside and smiling*). The "tiny spark" is gradually getting into a blaze! I did quite right in trying the effect of a little "*blowing*!" (*Aloud*). Besides, I have come to the conclusion, from considerable personal experience, that the male sex in general—I mean, taken in a *lump*—is no better than it should be.

DOCTOR (*laughing*). Indeed!

FANNY. I'm sorry to say they're a false, fickle, perfidious *lot*! They gain a poor confiding woman's heart only to trifle with it and trample on it! Poor dear mamma! I am no longer surprised at your little fits of temper, at your discontent with everything and everybody—now that I know the sad circumstances which blighted your youth and cast a gloom over your after-life! (*with affected pathos*).

DOCTOR (*aside*). What do I hear? (*Aloud and anxiously*). Has your mother, then, revealed——?

FANNY. No; but she might just as well, because I was sure to find it out.

DOCTOR. Find out *what*?

FANNY. A lot of things! Ah, doctor! if you had only heard her sigh as I have!

DOCTOR. Sigh?

FANNY. Yes, but that's not all. Poor mamma! You'd hardly believe the number of pearly drops I've seen fall from her poor eyes into her teacup.

DOCTOR. Pearly drops?

FANNY. But *that's* not all! (*in a very mysterious manner*). I once heard her, when she little thought I was listening, say in faltering accents, "Ah! if he had really loved me, would he not have declared his passion when I became a widow?"

DOCTOR. Did she? (*aside*). She loves me still! Dear Cleopatra!

FANNY. Who can she mean? I should so like to know. Perhaps, doctor, you'll help me to find out; but here she comes (*looking toward C. DOCTOR gives a violent start*). Why, what's the matter?

DOCTOR. Nothing; only a sort of a kind of a—I scarcely know whether I am standing on my head or my heels!

FANNY. On your head, of course!

DOCTOR. I thought so.

MRS. P. (*heard without*). Joseph! Joseph!

DOCTOR (*aside*). I can't meet her yet. The agitation—the trepidation—the perturbation—the——

FANNY. Perhaps you'd better retire, doctor—(*Aside*), or else he'll be flopping down on his knees to mamma before I've prepared her for the shock!

Enter MRS. PELICAN at R. H., followed by JOSEPH.

MRS. P. Joseph, inform your master that I shall dine in my own apartment. (*JOSEPH bows and goes out R. H. DOCTOR meets MRS. PELICAN as she comes down—looks tenderly at her—clasps his hands, and gives a deep sigh; then hurries up—stops again at C.—turns—gives her another tender look—another deep sigh, and hurries out at C.*)

MRS. P. (*watching DOCTOR in astonishment*). Why, what's the matter with the man?

FANNY. (*aside*). It's *your* turn now, mamma! You wanted to get a husband for me; so as one good turn deserves another, I'll see if I can't find one for you!

MRS. P. (*aside*). I must find out who this "girlish fancy" of hers is. (*Aloud*). Come here, Fanny. Of course *your* happiness is all I desire!

FANNY. And it's all *I* desire too, mamma!

MRS. P. Then have confidence in your mother—your *only* mother! Tell me the name of the young man who has won your affections?

FANNY. You asked me if I had any one in my eye, and I said I *had*, but I didn't tell you he was a *young* man. The fact is, mamma, I've been so often told that I am so giddy, so thoughtless, so flighty, that if I selected some one of *maturer* years he would give me the benefit of his experience—his advice—his—his——

MRS. P. *Maturer* years?

FANNY. Yes ! Besides, he has known me so long ! Ever since I was a tiny little mite. He used to dandle me on his knee, and buy me dolls, and toys, and sweets, and hardbake, and alecampane, and all that sort of thing !

MRS. P. (*aside*). Known her for years ! (*suddenly*). Mercy on us ! Can she be alluding to "Vicesimus ?

FANNY. But, ma dear, that which attracted me more than all was the respectful, I may say the *affectionate*, terms in which he always speaks of *you*.

MRS. P. Does he ? (*Aside*). Poor fluttering heart, be still ! Dear Vicesimus ! He hasn't, then, quite forgot his Cleopatra ! (*Aloud*). But is Doctor Prettywell, for it surely must be *he* to whom your remarks apply——

FANNY. Yes, mamma.

MRS. P. (*aside*). I thought so. (*Aloud*). Is he aware of your somewhat foolish partiality ?

FANNY. I think so. He'll tell you why ! Whenever he used to call, and we happened to be sitting side by side—I mean, you and I, mamma—I noticed that he always kept his eye fixed on us, and it always made me blush so.

MRS. P. (*aside*). Poor simple child. She flatters herself that it was on *her* that Vicesimus's enamoured glances were riveted.

FANNY. And don't you recollect the last time he took us to the theatre, how attentive, how polite he was to you ?

MRS. P. Yes. I remember he brought me three oranges and an ounce of acidulated drops into our box.

FANNY. And if you only had heard him just now, when I told him how shamefully you had been treated here ! "What !" he exclaimed, turning quite red in the face and tearing his hair out in handfuls. "What ? Dare to offer such an affront to so good, so amiable, so excellent a woman—a woman born to command, born to be beloved !"

MRS. Did he ?

Enter JOSEPH at R. H.

JOSEPH. Please, ma'am—Doctor Prettywell wishes to know if you are disengaged ?

MRS. P. I'll come to him. (*Exit JOSEPH R. H.*) How shall I meet him ? how conceal my feelings ? Once more, poor little fluttering heart, be still ! (*Aside and looking at FANNY*). Poor Fanny ! I shall be sorry to cut her out ; but constancy like Vicesimus's deserves and shall have its reward !

Exit at R.H.

FANNY. There ! I flatter myself I've managed that rather cleverly. I've given tranquillity to Jeremiah, happiness to Georgina, I've got mamma a husband, and—but stop a bit ! who's to get one for *me* ? Oh dear, dear ! I haven't half done yet !

Enter MRS. MAJOR *very hurriedly at c.*

MRS. MAJOR. Oh ! what shall I do ? what shall I do ?

FANNY. Georgina dear, what's the matter ?

MRS. MAJOR. Oh, Fanny, such an event ! I quite forgot to tell you that a person, I can't call him a gentleman, has been following me about everywhere in the most persevering, the most audacious manner, for the last month !

FANNY. What a contrast to Augustus !

MRS. MAJOR. And at last he has actually had the effrontery to write to me. A groom called just now with a letter, and was in the act of giving it to Mary with strict injunctions to deliver it to me, and to me only, when my husband suddenly appeared and snatched the letter out of his hand.

FANNY (*aside*). Something more for me to do ! I shall never get my work done here !

MRS. MAJOR. He must have read the letter by this time ! Oh ! what, what will he think of me ? But here he comes ! and what a dreadful temper he looks in !

Enter MAJOR *hurriedly at c. looking very wild and agitated, a letter in his hand ; comes forward.*

MAJOR (*folding his arms and assuming a tragic attitude*). So, madam !—I repeat So, madam !—you may well tremble at the sight of your hitherto too confiding but now indignant husband !

MRS. MAJOR. But, Jeremiah dear——

MAJOR. Don't "Jeremiah dear" me ! Are you aware, unhappy woman, that I might give you in charge to the police ?—no ! I don't mean that—that I might insist on a separation ? or call your ignoble accomplice out and shoot him ?—which I *would* do, if I were sure he wouldn't shoot *me* ! But no ! I prefer to expose, to unmask you !

Enter MRS. PELICAN *hastily at c., followed by* DOCTOR.

MRS. P. What is all this disturbance about ? What has happened ?

MAJOR. You've arrived just in time ! I only wish the entire universe were assembled in this breakfast-room to hear me !

MRS. MAJOR (*shrugging her shoulders*). Pshaw ! they could only laugh at your absurd suspicions !

MAJOR. Suspensions ? Come I like that, when I have the proofs—you hear, madam, the proofs—of your misconduct !—This letter, madam ! this letter ! (*producing letter and flourishing it*).

MRS. P. A letter !

MAJOR. Yes ! listen and shudder ! (*taking letter out of envelope which he lets fall on stage, then reading in an impressive tone*). "Star of my life, idol of my heart." That's pretty well to begin with ! (*reading again*). "Ever since the God of Love first presented you to my enraptured orbs !"—(*Aside*). What does the fellow mean by "orbs" ?—(*Reading again*). "I have loved you"—

point of admiration; here it is, there's no mistake about the point of admiration! (*showing letter to Mrs. P. and Doctor*). But that's not all! (*reads again*). "In order to bask in your divine presence, I am prepared to sweep every obstacle from my path." There's a sanguinary ruffian! Of course I'm one of the obstacles to be swept away!

MRS. P. And how is the letter signed?

MAJOR. There *is* no signature!

FANNY (*aside*). That's fortunate! (*picking up the envelope unseen and putting it in her pocket*).

MAJOR (*to Mrs. MAJOR*). Now, madam, what have you to say?

MRS. MAJOR. Simply this, that I am more than ever indignant at your preposterous and odious suspicions.

FANNY (*suddenly confronting MAJOR*). So am I! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Jeremiah! and so ought you, mamma, and so ought everybody! And what's more, I'm determined that poor dear innocent Georgina shall be no longer unjustly accused!

MRS. P. } What's that?

MAJOR. }

FANNY. I daresay I shall be scolded, but I'm used to that; in fact, I rather like it; and after all it was sure to be found out sooner or later; in a word—that letter——

MRS. P. Well?

FANNY. Was intended for *me*!

MRS. MAJOR (*aside to her*). Fanny!

FANNY (*aside to her*). Hush! I'm engaged in a little business of *my own* now!

MRS. P. For you?

FANNY. Yes! although I particularly told him not to write to me.

MRS. P. Told him? Told *who*?

FANNY. Augustus!

MRS. P. Who's Augustus?

FANNY. *My* Augustus, of course!

MRS. MAJOR. I can confirm Fanny's words, having been in possession of the whole particulars for the last hour.

MAJOR. Have you? Then perhaps you can furnish us with Augustus's other name—if he's got one (*satirically*).

MRS. MAJOR. Certainly—Noodle.

FANNY. (*very quickly*). No—Boodle!

DOCTOR. Augustus Boodle? let me see! of course! I first met him at Cheltenham!

FANNY. So did I!

DOCTOR. He was only a lad then, and was going into the army, —to distinguish himself, as he said.

FANNY. I can't say whether he did distinguish *himself*, but I know that he very soon distinguished *me*.

DOCTOR. The Boodles of Gloucestershire. There's not a more respected family in the county! Come, my dear Mrs. Pelican, if you'll take my advice, you'll not hesitate in accepting Augustus Noodle—I mean Boodle—as a son-in-law!

MRS. P. Well, I'll think the matter over, and then perhaps I may say yes.

FANNY (*coaxingly*). Suppose you say "yes" first, mamma, and think the matter over afterwards?

MRS. P. (*ironically*). But Fanny, what about a certain party of "*maturer years*," on whose *experience* you proposed to rely?

FANNY. Let me ask you, mamma, would it have been dutiful in a daughter to deprive her mother of the object of her early affection?

MAJOR. What's that? "Early affection"—"object"?

MRS. P. Yes! there stands the object (*pointing to DOCTOR*). In a word, I have been induced to accept the hand of Doctor Prettywell, from his many amiable qualities and (*aside to DOCTOR*) his *constancy*. Here, Vicesimus (*holding her hand out to him*).

DOCTOR. Thanks, Cleopatra (*taking her hand and kissing it*).

MAJOR (*very timidly to MRS. MAJOR*). Georgina! can you forgive your Jeremiah? I don't know how I may *look*, but you've no idea how *small* I feel.

MRS. MAJOR. This once I do! but remember, this once *only*. There (*giving her hand to MAJOR*).

MAJOR. Then, in spite of all petty domestic discords, everybody is happy at last.

FANNY. Which only proves the truth of the old adage, that "After a Storm comes a Calm."

FINIS.

For permission to act this piece apply to the Author by letter, to the care of MESSRS. KELLY & Co., 51, Great Queen Street, W.C.

•• *The Portrait of MR. MADDISON MORTON, which appeared in the JANUARY Number, is copied (by permission) from a Cabinet Photograph taken by the LONDON STEREOSCOPIC COMPANY.*

THE ROSE OF PARADISE.

The legend runs thus : When driven from Paradise Eve implored the angel guarding the gates to grant her if but a flower from the Garden of Eden. He plucked a rose, and kissing its petals said : "Mother of all future generations, take this rose, culled in Paradise, as a lasting memento of your happiness, and know, that at some time of her mortal life, its fragrance shall be inhaled by every daughter of Earth, whether for weal or woe—'Tis the Rose of Love.'"

He pluck'd a red, red rose,
As the day died in the skies,
"Fairest flow'r," he said, "aye, bloom
A Rose of Paradise.
And so my love shall live,
Tho' between us rolls the sea,
And the rose shall speak unto
Thy trusting heart of me."

His ship sail'd with the dawn,
And the days have grown to years,
But the maid is waiting still,
Her eyes bedimm'd with tears.
Once through the starry night
Came a voice from out the sea,
Wailing, "Maiden, never will
The lad return to thee."

"The red, red rose he swore
Pledge of truth and love to be
Dead, long dead—its wither'd leaves
A rose of Destiny."
'Twas an angel spoke ; he kiss'd
The brow of the maiden fair,
He mingl'd silver threads with
The threads of her golden hair,
Then breath'd a silent blessing,
On the heart so wrung with pain,
And new love, full and perfect,
Woke to life and strength again.

EDITH PRINCE.

THE EARLS OF SHAFTESBURY.

AT noon on Thursday, the 8th of October last, there was performed a religious function of so pathetic and so universal an interest as to be unsurpassed by anything which has ever preceded it in our generation. It was held in the most venerable, if for no other reason because the most sacred to genius and virtue, of all the temples of the land ; and it was a funeral service over the remains of a loved and venerated nobleman who throughout a life unusually long had achieved and sustained an unprecedented reputation as a colossus of philanthropy and beneficence.

The glorious Abbey of Westminster was touched upon this occasion with a sombreness and solemnity beyond the wont of the most sorrowful of its celebrations. "As mid-day drew near," to quote the vivid words of a contemporary chronicler, "its vast spaces filled with crowds hushed by reverence, and darkened by the conventional signs of mourning. A few lights gleamed from the scene near the organist's seat, and the eye, ranging along transept of 'long-drawn aisle,' saw distinctly but the painted effigies of a goodly and fitting company of saints. The place might have been prepared for some gloomy pageant—some act of national humiliation and sorrow—rather than the celebration of a noble career, closed in honour amid all men's praises. Yet, sooth to say, the better and inward sense of sight perceived Westminster Abbey illuminated as rarely before. No ordinary company assembled there. Indeed the least notable part of it was made up of those who, distinguished by rank and place, mourned for one of themselves. Though royalty sent its representatives in the Marquis of Hamilton and Colonel Colville, though the church was represented by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Liverpool, statesmanship by Lord Northbrook and Sir Richard Cross, diplomacy by the Greek Embassy, municipal power by the Lord and Lady Mayoress, and society by a host of well-known names, the real significance of the great gathering lay in the indistinguishable but imposing mass of the representatives of humanity. Seldom have the forces that are warring against vice and want had so grand a parade. They rallied round the crape-decked banners of their chief in a strength which goes far to explain how it is that, amid many discouragements, victory seems inclining to their side. But

those who looked at the throng from some place of advantage in the interior saw not all. Bodies of delegates were forming up in the cloisters, waiting to fall in behind the train of mourners, while the open spaces around the Abbey were occupied by a multitude of humbler people, sufficient to fill six times the space available within. All this gave forth a light of its own—the light of sympathy with a well-spent life and of fellow-feeling with the practical Christianity which thinks more of visiting ‘the fatherless and the widow in their affliction’ than of insisting upon the Shibboleths of creeds. To look upon all was certainly to strengthen faith in human kind. Lord Shaftesbury was neither warrior nor statesman; his rank and dignities were the least thing about him; he had never received a vote of thanks from the Legislature, or sought the world’s honours along the recognised ways thereto. He was simply a good man who chanced to be an Earl, and, as a good man rather than as an Earl, the sympathisers with true nobility came out in their thousands to pay the last honours.”

The essential grandeur of the spectacle lay in the spontaneous homage of whatever is powerful for good in English society—in the thousands of earnest men and women gathered round the flower-decked coffin, which, raised on high before the altar, was the brightest and most beautiful feature in the scene. Acting as body-guard to the honoured remains—they would have been pall-bearers but for the absence of a pall—were some of the dead nobleman’s comrades on bloodless fields of glory. These closely surrounded the coffin of their chief and exemplar, eloquent in their presence not less than faithful in their devotion. The crowd was swelled, or rather its nucleus was composed, of deputations representing some two hundred religious and philanthropic bodies, with all of which the deceased nobleman, in whose honour they had so mournfully and yet so hopefully congregated, had been more or less closely associated. On the day following the memorial service at Westminster Abbey all that was mortal of the late Earl of Shaftesbury was deposited, in the presence of his relatives, friends, neighbours and retainers, in the family tomb at the Church of St. Giles, in the immediate neighbourhood of the family seat, known as St. Giles’s House, and near to Cranbourne, Dorsetshire.

Thus was the good Earl gathered to his fathers.

Who was he? and who were they?

The answer to the first question, in the present state of public information, may safely be a short one; the greater fulness, wherever its necessity may arise, may well be accorded to what belongs to the remoter fields of historical inquiry.

Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G. Baron Ashley of Wimborne St. Giles, county Dorset, and Baron Cooper of Pawlett, county Somerset, the most eminent social

reformer of the present century, and whose name is inextricably interwoven with most of the humane movements of a couple of generations, was born in Grosvenor Square, on the 28th of April, 1801. He was a direct descendant of the first Earl of Shaftesbury, and had, therefore, Plantagenet blood in his veins, and was of the lineage of William the Conqueror. He was the eldest of ten children, and he afterwards became the father of the same number. His childhood was mostly spent in Dorsetshire, in the family home, which contains many historic mementoes, and is a fine specimen of the great class of stately English mansions. He was educated successively at Harrow and Oxford; and the late Bishop Short, of Adelaide, who was a fellow-student with him at Christ Church, said, in speaking of him on the platform of the Victoria Institute, that "he well remembered, although two generations had passed, watching Lord Ashley day after day walking up the great hall of Christ Church, Oxford, on his way to lecture, assiduous in his duties, diligent in his studies," and remembered thinking, "If that is a specimen of the English aristocracy, we have in the House of Lords an institution which has no rival throughout the world." On the subject of studies Lord Shaftesbury himself said: "In early life I was passionately devoted to science; so much so, that I was almost disposed to pursue science to the exclusion of everything else. It passed away, and I betook myself to literature, hoping that I should not only equal, but that I should rival, many in mental accomplishments. Other things were before me, and other things passed away, because, do what I would, I was called to another career; and now I find myself, at the end of a long life, not a philosopher, not an author, but simply an old man who has endeavoured to do his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him."

Lord Ashley obtained a first class in classics, May 17th, 1823, graduated M.A., June 21st 1832; and was created D.C.L., June 15th, 1841. At the age of twenty-five, that is, in the year 1826, he was returned to the House of Commons as member for Woodstock, and supported the governments of Liverpool and Canning. In the administration of the Duke of Wellington, January, 1828—November, 1830, he was a Commissioner of the Board of Control. He was returned for Dorchester in 1830, the year of his marriage, June 9th, with Lady Emily Cowper, daughter of Peter Leopold fifth Earl Cowper, who died October 15th, 1872, after having been the mother of a large family of sons and daughters.

Lord Ashley, who had previously migrated from Dorchester to the county constituency of Dorsetshire, was elected one of the members for Bath in August, 1847, and sat for that borough until he succeeded his father in the peerage, June 2nd, 1851. He was a Lord of the Admiralty in the late Sir Robert Peel's administration in 1834-5; and on the removal from the House of Commons of the late Mr. John Sadler, took charge of the famous Ten Hours Bill, with

which his memory is, *inter alia*, so affectionately and immortally associated. When Sir Robert Peel again took office in 1841, Lord Ashley was invited to join the administration, but refused upon finding that the Premier's views would not permit him to support the Bill just mentioned. It was this high-principled repudiation of office that marked the comparative alienation of his future career from merely political purposes, and his almost exclusive consecration to schemes of philanthropy and social amendment ; so that, notwithstanding the evident capacity he possessed for becoming a leader in politics and amongst statesmen, he thrust from him every ambitious desire for ministerial distinction, and devoted himself at once and for always to the furthering of movements to alleviate the sufferings and to raise the condition of the most neglected of his fellow-creatures. The chief object for which he laboured, in and out of Parliament, at meetings in Exeter Hall, or in the smallest and most insignificant of mission-halls and school-rooms, was the improvement of the circumstances of the labouring classes in every respect in which he could influence them for good. His power in the counsels of the Evangelical party within the Church of England was considerable ; and he has the reputation of having suggested the bishops created by the late Lord Palmerston, who was accustomed to consult him about their selection.

The strong natural inclination to science and literature which was overborne in the late Earl of Shaftesbury by a stronger sense of sympathy and duty with regard to human suffering and wrong, as if by a divine compulsion, was in fact an hereditary and transmitted determination. For Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, son of Sir John Cooper, of Rockburn, Hampshire, has left the reputation of having been one of the ablest persons, greatest politicians, and most versatile and distinguished ministers of the seventeenth century. His mother was Anne, daughter and sole heiress of Sir Anthony Ashley, of Wimborne St. Giles, where he was born July 21st, 1621 ; and where, during his boyhood, he was considered a prodigy of whom very extraordinary things were early predicted. He lost his father in March, 1631 ; and at the age of fifteen, in Lent term, 1636, became a fellow-commoner of Exeter College, Oxford, of which the celebrated Dr. John Prideaux, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, was at that time rector.

From Oxford the young baronet removed to Lincoln's Inn, where he applied himself especially to the study of constitutional law, in which he presently attained an almost undisputed pre-eminence. The precocity he had shown from the cradle still lingered about him ; and in the nineteenth year of his age he was chosen one of the burgesses to represent the town of Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, in the Parliament which assembled at Westminster on the 13th of April, 1640, and which was so rashly dissolved by the King on the 5th of the following month.

At the beginning of the Civil War he appears to have given very valid proofs of his adherence to the royal party.

He repaired to Oxford, and was there presented by Lucius Carey, second Viscount Falkland, to the King, to whom he proposed to administer certain plans of conciliation by which the loyalty of his Majesty's revolted subjects might be recovered and assured. Thus he offered to the unfortunate Charles the first fruits of his courage and address; presenting to the King a digested plan for compromising or accommodating matters between him and those of his people who were in arms against him. Charles hesitated about the acceptance of offers so responsible from so young an agent; to which the latter, with the natural readiness of his character, answered that the circumstance of his youth would not be the worse for the King's affairs, provided the business was done. He received in consequence a commission from the King to promise an indemnity and redress of grievances to such of the parliamentary garrisons as would lay down their arms. His plan seems to have taken some effect; for Weymouth actually surrendered to the King, and Sir Anthony Ashley Cooper, as his style then was, was made governor. Some delays occurred in the course of his obtaining this office; and whether disgusted with these, and giving scope to the natural instability of his temper, as is intimated by Clarendon, or offended, as Mr. Locke states, at Weymouth having been plundered by the forces of Prince Maurice, he made one of those sudden turns, of which his political career furnishes several instances, and went over to the other side. After this Clarendon says that he "gave himself up, body and soul, to the Parliament, and became an implacable enemy to the Royal Family." Such an assertion is to be received with reserve; although it remains that Sir Anthony accepted a commission from the Parliament, and raised forces in Dorsetshire, with which he took Wareham by storm, and reduced the greater part of the county to the obedience of the Parliament; whose power, however, he sought to moderate by expedients intended to have in addition the collateral effect of propping the royal cause. He held various high charges under the authority of the republic. Towards the end of 1645 he was chosen sheriff of Norfolk, and approved by Parliament; and the next year, 1646, he served as sheriff of Wiltshire, and had an ordinance of Parliament to enable him to reside out of the county. In 1651, he was one of that committee which was named for the revival and reform of the law.

If the accusations of Clarendon, as has been indicated, are to be taken with reserve, *à fortiori* is the same caution to be used in admitting, or even in reading, the palpable slanders of Dryden. In both cases there was much of the too willing belief and censure of political antagonism, to which in the case of the latter was added the seductive recklessness of poetical antithesis.

Later in the life of the first Earl of Shaftesbury, it was a

standing joke amongst his opponents that he hoped to be chosen King of Poland, at the vacancy when John Sobieski was elected, A.D. 1674. This was probably only a revived and new edition of an improbable story that he expected Cromwell would have made him King of England. His supposed election, its causes and effects, are very humorously stated in a pamphlet which enjoyed a republication in the series of Lord Somers' "Tracts." An allusion to this burlesque candidature for the throne of Poland was introduced by Dryden into his satirical poem of "The Medal; a Satire on Sedition," a production occasioned by the striking of a medal on account of the throwing out of an indictment against the Earl of Shaftesbury for high treason, at the Old Bailey, November, 1681, on which occasion the Whig party made great rejoicings by the ringing of bells, the lighting of bonfires, and other signs of the humbler kind of inarticulate political feeling, in every part of London. "The Medal," it needs scarcely be said, is a most caustic invective against Lord Shaftesbury and the Whigs; but not unnaturally ran into error in the extremity of an attack which is at once measured in its rhythm and beyond measure in the fierceness of its denunciation. Some of the earlier lines of "The Medal," referring to the opening of Lord Shaftesbury's public career, for instance, describe him not only with bitterness, but with historical inaccuracy, as

"A martial hero first, with early care
Blown, like a pigmy to the winds, to war;
A beardless chief, a rebel ere a man;
So young his hatred to his prince began."

Then without a break, but with equal injustice, the poet proceeds:

"Next this—how wildly will ambition steer!
A vermin wriggling in the usurper's ear;
Bartering his venal wit for sums of gold,
He cast himself into the saint-like mould;
Groan'd, sigh'd, and pray'd, while godliness was gain,
The loudest lagpipe of the squeaking train.
But, as 'tis hard to cheat a juggler's eyes,
His open lewdness he could ne'er disguise.
There split the saint, for hypocritic zeal
Allows no sins but those it can conceal.

* * * * *

Power was his aim; but thrown from that pretence,
The wretch turn'd loyal in his own defence,
And malice reconciled him to his prince.
Him, in the anguish of his soul, he served,
Rewarded faster still than he deserved.
Behold him now exalted into trust;
His counsels oft convenient, seldom just;
Even in the most sincere advice he gave,
He had a grudging still to be a knave.
The frauds he learn'd in his fanatic years,
Made him uneasy in his lawful gears;
At best, as little honest as he could,
And, like white witches, mischievously good;
To his first bias longingly he leans,
And rather would be great by wicked means."

As to the latter passage and its several accusations, it may be said that Shaftesbury was by no means in a hurry to submit to Cromwell's domination, any more than he had been to join the Parliament; for to his tact, finesse, and ambition as a statesman, the uncontrolled authority of an individual, and of one, too, who was inaccessible to all arts of cajolery or management, and who only acted upon his own opinion and impulses, presented a very unpromising field of exertion. Accordingly, he is said to have been very active in opposing the dispossession of the Long Parliament; and, being a member of that convoked by the Protector in 1656, he signed the famous protestation against the personal usurpation of Cromwell, which occasioned a very sudden dissolution of that assembly. Notwithstanding this occasional opposition, Sir Anthony was a member of the Protector's Privy Council, and was so far in his favour that he is said by his enemies to have cherished hopes of succeeding Cromwell in his power, and with this view to have aimed at becoming his son-in-law. Hence he is called, in the "Dream of the Cabal," which occurs in the first volume of "State Poems:"

"A little bob tail'd lord, urchin of State,
A praise-God-bare-bone peer, whom all men hate."

As a gloss upon Dryden's accusation of hypocrisy and sanctimoniousness, it may be said that, according to North, the Earl of Shaftesbury, "in all his ways and workings, held a concert with the anti-monarchists and fanatics." As to his dissipation, the well-known speech of Charles II., and his reply to the same, are generally regarded, although in reality not quite conclusively, as sufficient evidence. "I believe, Shaftesbury," said the Merry Monarch, "thou art the wickedest dog in England." "May it please your Majesty," retorted the statesman, "of a *subject* I believe I am." The temptation to such a repartee was certainly in great part a verbal one merely; and an admission made for other than moral considerations cannot be regarded as necessarily carrying with it all it seems to convey of self-accusation.

North, the recorder of all that was evil concerning Shaftesbury, says that, "whether out of inclination, custom, or policy, I will not determine, it is certain he was not behindhand with the court in the modest pleasures of the time, and to what excess of libertinism they were commonly grown, is no secret. There was a deformed old gentleman, named Sir Paul Neal, who, they say, sat for the picture of Sydrophele, in 'Hudibras;' and about town was called the Lord Shaftesbury's groom, because he watered his mares in Hyde Park with Rhenish wine and sugar, and not seldom a bait of cheese-cakes."

Whatever Sir Anthony's private political principles might have been, he failed not to take a share of power upon the changes which so rapidly succeeded the death of Cromwell. Under the

Rump Parliament, he was one of the Council of State, and a commissioner for managing the army, one of the committee to secure the Tower, and colonel of a regiment of horse. He made use of the influence which these situations afforded him for hastening the Restoration. Sir Anthony had long maintained a secret correspondence with the royal party, and was to have joined Sir George Booth at his rising, had he not been so suddenly crushed. He was taxed with this intended co-operation in Parliament; but he was at least resolved not to bear witness against himself, for he made the highest professions of his innocence, and imprecated God's judgments on himself and his posterity if he had the slightest communication with the King or his friends. This was certainly rather an emphatic way of pleading "not guilty." Nevertheless he was one of those who invited Monk into England, and was the first to supply him with a regiment of horse. He was, moreover, active in defeating the schemes of General Lambert; and, by way of climax in this connection, was named one of the twelve members who were deputed by the House of Commons to invite the King to return to his dominions.

For his services in reference to the Restoration, and three days before his restored Majesty's coronation, he was raised to the peerage, April 20th, 1661, with the title of Baron Ashley of Wimborne St. Giles. Soon afterwards he was made Chancellor and Under-Treasurer of the Exchequer, and on the death of that loyal old peer, who was also his great friend and patron, the wise and worthy Earl of Southampton, he was appointed one of the lords commissioners for executing the office of High Treasurer.

As a member of the "Cabal" ministry great odium has been thrown upon him by some writers, whilst others affirm that its more obnoxious measures were the objects of his opposition. His conduct in any case appears to have been satisfactory to the King, so that in January, 1672, he was constituted lord-lieutenant of the county of Dorset, and in the month of April following was created Lord Cooper of Pawlett, in the county of Somerset, and Earl of Shaftesbury. In November of the same year he was raised to the great and envied position of Lord High Chancellor of England, the duties of which he executed, even as allowed by his enemies, with equal ability and integrity. "With what prudence, candour, honour and integrity he acquitted himself in that great and weighty employment, the transactions of the Court of Chancery during the time of his chancellorship will best testify; justice then ran in an equal channel, so that the cause of the rich was not suffered to swallow up the rights of the poor; nor was the strong or cunning oppressor permitted to devour the weak or unskilful opposer, but the abused found relief suitable to their distress, and those by whom they were abused a severe reprehension answerable to their crimes. The mischievous consequences which commonly arose from the delays and other practices of that court

were, by ingenious and judicious management, very much abated, and everything weighed and determined with exact judgment and equity."

The Earl of Shaftesbury held the office of Lord Chancellor, however, only for twelve months, resigning the great seal, in consequence of a court intrigue against him, November 9th, 1673. After this he took over his great influence and talents to the side of the opposition, and became so violent as a partisan that he was at length sent to the Tower, where he remained more than a year, and obtained his release at last only by making a full submission.

In due course Lord Shaftesbury returned to power, and had the merit of bringing forward, and of causing to be passed, the Act known popularly as that of Habeas Corpus; but his efforts to exclude the Duke of York from the succession roused that prince to such strenuous exertions that in four months the ministry was turned out, and shortly afterwards the Earl was sent a second time to the Tower, on a charge of high treason. This was in 1681, and when on the 24th of October of that year the grand jury at the Old Bailey found no true bill against him, his enlargement and declaration of innocence were received with great rejoicings by the people, and the medal was struck upon the occasion, which, as we have already seen, formed the subject of the satiric muse of John Dryden. His triumph, moreover, had been damped beforehand by the withering satire with which his character had been depicted just previously in Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel."

"Of these the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages curst;
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands, to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legg'd thing, a son;
Got, while his soul did huddled notions try,
And born a shapeless lump, like Anarchy.
In friendship false, implacable in hate,
Resolved to ruin, or to rule, the State."

In November, 1682, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, prematurely decrepit with the vicissitudes of his life and career, retired in

search of repose to Holland, and died at Amsterdam, on the 22nd of January, 1683, in the sixty-second year of his age. His remains were brought to this country for interment, and were laid to rest with those of his ancestors at Wimborne St. Giles, where a noble monument with a large inscription to his honour, was erected in 1732 by his descendant, the fourth Earl of Shaftesbury.

Amongst the cross opinions formed and held about the first Earl of Shaftesbury it should be remembered to his advantage that he was the friend and patron of the philosopher John Locke, who has done so much as his apologist to vindicate his character. Nothing of his writing has been published except some speeches; but he left in manuscript a "History of his own Times," and an "Essay on Toleration," which formed the basis of Locke's treatise on that subject.

In the continued line of even the most distinguished families, it must happen that some, if not indeed most, of its representatives are simply to be regarded as the *catena* of connection—the instruments or agents of transmission and continuity. Thus it happens that not much of interest for this generation attaches to the memory of Anthony Ashley Cooper, second Earl of Shaftesbury, so remorselessly described in the lines just quoted from the pen of "glorious" John Dryden. He was the only son of his father; and his mother, the second of the three wives of her husband, was Frances, daughter of David Cecil, Earl of Exeter. He was born on the 16th of January, 1651, and married Dorothy, daughter of John, Earl of Rutland, who bore him two sons, Anthony and Maurice—noted for his Greek scholarship and philosophical prepossessions—and three daughters.

The contemptuous language used by Dryden with reference to the second Earl of Shaftesbury is said not to have been intended to convey any reflection upon his outward appearance; the portraits, indeed, which remain represent him as uncommonly handsome. Nay, so much was his personal beauty an object of his attention, that he is said to have hastened his decease, which took place on the 16th of November, 1699, by his solicitude to remove by violent means an excrescence which disfigured his face. But the authority from which these circumstances are quoted seems to admit that he was of a very insignificant character; or at any rate that he was not at all distinguished by mental abilities. His want of capacity was a standing joke amongst the Tories. In an ironical pamphlet entitled "A modest Vindication of the Earl of Shaftesbury, in a Letter to a Friend concerning his being elected King of Poland," there occurs, among the list of his officers of the crown, "Prince Prettyman Perkinoski (*i.e.* Monmouth), our adopted heir, because a little wiser than our own son, and designed to be offered to the Diet as our successor."

The voices of the sages agree that men are often more jealous of their own reputation for talents, or that of their ancestors, than

for a good name for virtue and character. In accordance with this somewhat severe proposition, it is recorded that the third Earl of Shaftesbury—a man, as we shall shortly see, in a few words of intellectual attainment and distinction—resented more deeply this incidental attack on his father's understanding than the satire against his grandfather, in which Dryden has poured forth almost the utmost of his vituperative energy. The passage in question is alleged to have been the occasion of the disrespectful mention of Dryden which is to be found in several places in the works of the third Earl of Shaftesbury.

With this nobleman, who was born on the 26th of February, 1671, and who, like his younger brother Maurice, was a man of extraordinary parts and learning, the intellectual glories of the family revived. He was educated at home by a very learned lady under the inspection of his grandfather; and, after the usual course of foreign travel, was elected, in 1693, to represent the borough of Poole in the House of Commons. Here his conduct was marked by an honourable and earnest support of every benevolent measure; but his public career was cut short by the delicacy of his health, so that from the year 1698 he chiefly resided abroad, devoting himself to study, and corresponding with Bayle, Le Clerc, and other *literati*. In 1704 the "French Prophets" occasioned so much disturbance that steps were proposed for suppressing them, which induced his lordship, in his uniformly sustained character of an enemy to persecution, to write his "Letter concerning Enthusiasm." In 1709 appeared his "Moralists," a philosophical rhapsody; and in 1711 he went to Italy for the recovery of his health, but died at Naples on the 14th of February, 1713, and was succeeded by Anthony, his eldest son, whose mother was Jane, daughter of Thomas Ewer, Esq., of Bushy Hall, Hertfordshire. The edition of his wonderfully popular work, which is still occasionally reprinted, "Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions and Times," comprises all that he intended for the press; but in 1716 came out his "Letters to a Young Man (that is, Michael Ainsworth, the son of a parish clerk) at the University," and in 1721, Toland published "Letters from the Earl of Shaftesbury to Robert Molesworth, Esq." He was an elegant classical scholar; but his style is affectedly poetic, and there runs through his works a vein of scepticism very unfavourable to Christianity, though he edited the "Select Sermons" of Whichcot, to which also he contributed a preface.

The fourth incumbent of the title and honours of the family was Anthony Ashley Cooper, who married the Lady Susan Noel, daughter to Baptist, third Earl of Gainsborough. This lady dying without issue, he took to wife Mary, second surviving daughter of Jacob Bouverie, Viscount Folkestone, and sister to William Bouverie, Earl of Radnor. This second marriage took place on the 26th of March, 1759; and her ladyship, who survived her

husband till February, 1805, has supplied in a pious epitaph nearly all that it is necessary to say about him. This epitaph, which occurs amongst the ancestral effigies at Wimborne St. Giles, describes him as a man "who, from a consistency of virtuous conduct in public and private, had as many friends and as few enemies as ever fell to the lot of man. Having lived in honour, he died in peace; the result of a life well spent and of hope grounded on the Redeeming Mercy of that Adorable All-Perfect Being to whom he looked up with incessant gratitude; of whose glory he was zealous, to whose creatures he was kind, whose will was his study, and whose service his delight. Having received and diffused happiness, he departed this life, amidst the prayers of the rich and poor, May 27th, 1771, aged sixty-one. His works follow him." Not *all* his works, literally; for there remained behind that very substantial one to which an incidental allusion has been made, the handsome monument which he erected to the memory of his illustrious great-grandfather, the creator of the later splendours of his family. "There never existed a man," Dr. Huntingford remarks, "of more benevolence, moral worth and true piety."

Anthony Ashley Cooper, fifth Earl of Shaftesbury, F.R.S., the son of the fourth Earl by his second wife, who was born September 17th, 1761, and who succeeded his father in 1771, married, July 17th, 1786, Barbara, daughter of Sir John Webb, bart. of Oldstock House, Wiltshire, by whom he left one daughter, Barbara, born in 1788, who succeeded to estates of the value of £20,000 a year. This lady became the wife, August 8th, 1814, of the Honourable William Ponsonby, who was created, 1838, Lord de Mauley, his wife having inherited her mother's right to the ancient barony of Mauley. His lordship died without male issue, May 14th, 1811, when the honours of the family devolved upon the Honourable Cropley Ashley Cooper, at that time clerk of the deliveries in the Ordnance, and one of the representatives in Parliament of the borough of Dorchester. Cropley, the sixth Earl of Shaftesbury, was born December 27th, 1768; and married, December 10th, 1796, Anne, daughter of George, third Duke of Marlborough, who died August 7th, 1865, in her ninety-first year, after having been the mother of ten children.

In the same year of his accession to the peerage Lord Shaftesbury was appointed temporarily to fill the office of chairman of committees during the illness of Lord Walsingham; and on the 10th of November, 1814, was chosen his permanent successor, and thereupon sworn a member of the Privy Council. For nearly forty years the considerable duties of his office were fully and well performed by "old" Lord Shaftesbury, "who was never old when business pressed. Strong common sense, knowledge of the statute law, and, above all, uncompromising impartiality made him an autocrat in his department. When once he heard a case, and

deliberately pronounced judgment, submission almost invariably followed. . . . In the formal business of committees he rarely allowed the House of Lords to make a mistake, while he was prompt as well as safe in devising the most convenient mode of carrying any principle into practical effect. He was no theorist; there was nothing of the speculative philosopher in the constitution of his mind; and he therefore readily gained credit for being what he really was, an excellent man of business."

The sixth Earl of Shaftesbury died on the 2nd of June, 1851, and was succeeded by his eldest son, at that time M.P. for Bath, a former First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, and already highly distinguished by his many public exertions for the amelioration of the condition of the people. Of him, as of one in whom all the honours and intellectual achievements of his ancestors were fused into the sublimity of benevolence, we have already spoken; and his death it will be long before the nation ceases to deplore.

Anthony Cooper, the eighth and present Earl of Shaftesbury, was born June 27th, 1831, and married, August 22nd, 1857, Harriet, only daughter of George Hamilton, third Marquis of Donegall, K.P. Under the honoured name of Lord Ashley he represented the borough of Hull in the House of Commons from 1857 to 1859, and that of Cricklade from 1859 to 1865. He has already shown his interest in the religious and other well-being of the people; and we leave him with a repetition of the prayer, first formulated by the representative Armenians who addressed him in terms of condolence on the death of his father, that upon him might rest a double portion of the spirit of a predecessor so honoured and beloved wherever the name of virtue is understood.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCED TO THE STAGE.

HERE, then, was I, a regular member of the company of the Albatross, making my batter-pudding nightly to the satisfaction of authority and of the audience. Only Annie took care not to mismanage the chop twice, so I didn't get the stage to myself a second time. After the first fortnight Lady Maude became a "speaking part" again, and half a dozen sisterly sentences were put into my mouth. A fortnight later came a cold Derby day, and Miss Larkcom *would* go to Epsom in a low dress and an east wind, caught all but her death of cold, and was laid up in the hospital for a month. Slater put me into her part of Lady Jane—a page and a half long—but I retained the pudding, my speciality.

Not one of the principals ever condescended to speak to me off the stage. Miss Hope had never forgotten the preliminary affront. As for Annie, directly we got inside the theatre she seemed to become short-sighted, or I invisible. Indeed, a nearer acquaintance with that young person was teaching me already that the less you expected of her in a friendly way, the less likely you were to be disappointed. Once, standing at the wings, I dropped my fan, and Edwin Davenant picked it up for me without thinking. When he saw who was thanking him he looked as disconcerted as if I were the crossing-sweeper, whose broom he had inadvertently picked out of the mire. As for Mr. Gifford, his disdain was so sweeping and so impartially distributed that only a somebody could reasonably take offence at it. I was a nobody still. I questioned if I oughtn't to hold my head higher among the other nobodies, and not speak to the stage-doorkeeper and scene shifter, but wisely decided it was early days still to give myself airs. My promotion made matters worse. Slater was thought to favour me unduly, and the company must make up for it; they knew the way. What new boy at his first school doesn't get teased and bullied? It's a law of nature—of ill-nature thinks the boy, as long as he is new. Don't apple-pie beds, booby-traps, tossings in a blanket await him as surely as Latin grammar and cricket? So with new hands on all stages. Make up your

mind to have your patience and your temper tried till they snap. It's the test which determines your future position in the company.

But it's one thing to find your way out of the wood on the map, another not to lose it when you're inside.

"Here's a chance for poor little me to improve!" thought I, when intrusted with my new rôle. Judge of the study I gave the words, the action, the by-play! Conceive my efforts, when the night came, to throw myself wholly into the character I was impersonating!

Comes my first "point"—a neat repartee to Sister Blanche. I am working up to it by listening to her pretty prattle so as to fall in naturally with my retort. Just then, Clara Pretzman, a saucy but experienced little puss, who now plays Lady Maude, and has not forgiven me the lift she would have liked for herself, remarks aside, quite audibly:

"You've a large hair-pin sticking out of your head!" and there goes my hand wandering round my back hair in a fruitless search. "It's dropped," she added. I knew now it never was there, but the mischief was done. A nothing will ruffle a novice. Fluttered, thrown out, I barely managed to speak the right words at the right moment. So badly I spoke them, I should have died on the spot if shame were mortal.

The trick was repeated, with variations, making me, oh, how nervous for the next act! I battled on, and was getting back my spirit, when Annie, looking on with Davenant at the wings, began admonishing me in loud whispers, distracting me painfully by the efforts I must make to catch her orders.

"Put your chin up—put your chin up. Do you see what a trick she's got of dropping her head, like a dead bird?" and they laughed, the villains, whilst I struggled on lamely, tripped up at every turn; nerve gone, head in confusion, enthusiasm damped. When came my last chance in Act III., happening at a critical moment to cast a nervous glance off the scene, I there beheld Annie mimicking me cleverly in dumb show to a knot of spectators, all in convulsions of laughter at her antics.

I just floundered through—that was all—and went home wild with rage, with Annie, with every one. What's sport to one is death to another, we know; but sport goes on all the same. Night after night they must get their sport out of me. But forewarned is forearmed. Next time I stood fire better, then much better, then came one evening when I returned it.

The scene was the school-room scene; the personages Lady Maude and myself; our part was making believe to play chess in a corner whilst watching the love-making of Purefoy and Blanche, and putting in sly side-comments. Just as my cue was coming, Miss Clara leaned across and asked me a silly riddle I remembered at school.

"Why do rooks chatter?"

"Because they have *cause* for conversation, which is more than you have," I retorted calmly and quickly. My presence of mind so confounded her that she lost hers—and her cue. I had to help her out. Slater frowned at the wings and the actors tittered. For once I was allowed to finish my part in peace, acting so much better in consequence that I verily believed I had acted it well, and came off in high feather, feeling ready to look William Shakespeare himself in the face.

I was met by a remarkable sight.

A long, lank, slouching figure, with greyish-brown hair all awry, blue spectacles, beard of uncertain growth, and neglected attire, stiff and correct in plan as the text of a copy-book, but in itself like the careless copy, straggling, blurred and irregular.

Now, "*Cleópatra's*" success having proved fleeting after all, the programme for the remainder of the season was to be strengthened by an afterpiece, the immortal farce of "*Dr. Peppercorn*," in which the brilliant young comedian, Mr. Beattie Graves, was to make his first appearance at the Albatross.

I had never seen his starship, but needed not to be told that it was *Peppercorn*, the book-worm, looking at me now. So natural and yet so outlandish was the picture presented that, as I looked at him, I laughed out, though I tried to stop it. For what would be a pretty compliment from the other side of the curtain might here be taking a liberty. But he was watching me with grave and compassionate interest. No one had ever taken such friendly notice of me before. Nay, he went further, he spoke.

"You have not been long in the business, have you?" he inquired with fatherly kindness and curiosity.

Three months had gone by, I told him, since I had obtained my first engagement.

"What can have brought you to it?" he wondered aloud, reflectively, adding half theatrically, "Are there no shops to mind, no schools to teach, no infants to nurse, no telegraphs to work, no——"

"May be," I cut in saucily, still flushed with my little victory, "and so there are horses to ride, and crowns to wear, and thrones to fill. But beggars mustn't be choosers."

"Then it was starvation drove you there?" he said, with wistful solemnity.

This was putting it rather strong. I demurred.

"I suppose it was ambition," I said, hesitatingly; "but it is quite possible I may be mistaken."

"Hope so, Miss Adams, for your sake," he returned with an emphasis which made my heart sink of a sudden.

"What, am I such a hopeless 'duffer' as that?" I asked, distressed.

"Were you a Siddons I should say the same. Never expect

to get any satisfaction out of the stage, except your salary. Happy if you get that!"

"You say so, *you*?" I said incredulously, regarding this popular favourite with "roars of laughter," "rounds of applause," "money turned away from the doors" written in every line of his decorous wisacre's countenance, every detail of his comically-disordered attire, the ravellings of his coat-border, ink-spotted handkerchief, and linkless cuffs.

"I wish my worst enemy no other lot than to be branded 'light-character-eccentric comedian,' to the British public," he announced impressively; "stumbling over footstools, or into the arms of the wrong lady, pretending to be drunk, reiterating some foolish catch-phrase supposed to become comic by repetition, and—bringing down the house."

The bell rang, calling him away; but I stayed to see him suit his actions to his words, which he did with such evident zest and relish that I said to myself he too had been quizzing me.

My pride had to come down a peg, but a lower fall awaited it, and that immediately. Mounting the stairs to the dressing-room I entangled my train in some wire-netting and stayed five minutes trying to free the lace without tearing it. Through the open door of the manager's room I heard, without heeding at first, two voices in animated discussion. "Shakespeare spells ruin, my boy," said one.

The voice was the voice of Shirley Slater, with that "no appeal" ring in it we know too well.

"Well, and what matter, so long as it's not *your* ruin?" pertinently returned the peculiarly distinct accents of Mr. Francis Gifford. "There's Danvers at our back with more money than he knows how to throw away. It would take a social revolution to ruin him."

"He'll not throw it away on the drama," Slater confidently asserted. "A business man!"

"All business men have a dream, don't you know?" Mr. Gifford made counter-assertion. "My excellent old friend Danvers has long dreamt of immortalizing himself as benefactor to the ungrateful town of Plymstone, his birthplace. He has presented it with a pier on which nobody walks; a concert-room that had to be converted into a skating-rink before the first year was out; a museum from which the mummy was stolen the day after the opening; a church, and a model 'public.' These two have done well—the only two. His last fad is a bijou theatre, which I, for one, will warrant to finish its course as a music or a mission hall. No matter. We intend to open in July, and with legitimate drama. The Torreville Regatta is coming on. Miss Hope is sanguine. What say you?"

"I say no," replied Slater decisively. "I tell you I can't repeat in the country the unsuccessful experiment I tried here

when, last Christmas, I took Miss Hope's speculation off her hands. I'll have nothing to do with this venture of hers. She must stand or fall by her own resources. Come to me for hints and advice gratis. What's your programme?"

"We propose to open with 'Merry Wives' or one of the comedies, and to be ready with some modern trash to wash down the solids."

"'Cleopatra,' eh?" said Slater significantly.

"'Cleopatra,' or another chip from the same workshop. There's a working company from Torreville we can depend on for the minors. For principals there's Evergreen Edwin, and Beattie Graves, and Miss Torrens, whose engagement to Miss Hope lasts till Christmas, I am sorry to say."

"You should be glad," said Slater. "Competition keeps both up to the mark. You'll want a double for the seconds. Whom shall you take?"

"I don't care, so long as it's not that lively beauty, Clara Pretzman. I've enough of her playful attentions. You get tired of having chicken-bones thrown at you at supper as a mark of favour; and of being addressed as 'You beast,' even by way of a term of endearment. How about Miss Larkcom?"

"If you'll follow my advice," said Slater confidentially, "and save yourself a world of trouble, you'll just let her go, and take little Elizabeth Adams."

Little! and I stood five feet six in my slippers, and was never, even at eighteen, ethereal in figure. At the sound of my name, though, I listened hard, expecting, in defiance of the proverb, to hear something good.

"What, a mere baby in the business?" objected Mr. Gifford in careless surprise. "You're joking, man."

"You can't do better," said Slater oracularly. "Mark my words."

Guess if my heart thumped with pride and delight! No mistake now. I had made a stride in advance that night.

"Well, she's got a good voice, knows how to use it, seems intelligent, and articulates well," allowed our author magnanimously. "Still, how you can possibly depend upon her except for utility, and irresponsible utility —"

"That's not it," struck in Slater. "What you *may* depend on is that if you take her as understudy, her services in that line will never be required, you'll find. Annie Torrens will never be too ill to act, never throw up a part as too insignificant if you hold over her head as a substitute a girl who is vastly too good-looking for her to risk comparisons with."

What Mr. Gifford replied I don't know. Good looks again! and just when I thought I had made a real impression, and revelation of ability! I hurried upstairs in a terrible state of mind, and blinded by tears and excitement ran up against somebody in

the passage. It was Miss Hope. It might have been the Queen, I should not have minded. I even forgot to apologize.

"Why, what ails the child?" she said in a kindly tone that upset the little in me that still held its own.

"Oh, Miss Hope!" I faltered miserably and broke down, hiding my face.

"What has happened? Have they been badgering you again?" she asked, with some indignation.

"No, no, I can bear that. *Much* worse," I gave out unsteadily; then, amid stifled sobs, I repeated the gist of the dialogue I had just heard, concluding with a declaration that if I was only good for a w—w—waxwork, I had rather r—r—retire from the stage (dear, how fine it sounded!), though I had to be a w—w—washerwoman!

Miss Hope laughed so long, so loud, and so heartily, that her mirth was catching, and I presently found myself laughing too.

"My girl," she said, "I never thought to live to see a woman cry because men called her pretty. You must be crazy. But I like you for it. Come in here, child."

She took me into her dressing-room, whose threshold I had never crossed since the night of my fateful mistake. The dresser was not there, and "Cleopatra," who seemed in a pleasant humour, allowed me to help her off with her stage-finery, talking nineteen to the dozen all the while.

"You're getting along well enough," she said, "but not so fast that you can afford to despise the start a good stage appearance can give you. Bless me! why, it's half the victory won. You needn't go out of this house to see how a fiddle-headed woman with a book-of-beauty face can turn the fools' heads (that's all but a few) among the audience," she added, with the discretion characteristic of us stagers.

As a very young stager, I was bound to be careful.

"Miss Torrens seems universally admired," I said, securely.

"Aye, let her alone for a sweet young wife in her teens, or the pretty governess of whom young lords get enamoured. Why, there are two—not lords, certainly, nor young, but old cotton lords—who would have married her if she hadn't a husband somewhere already. So have two fools escaped a worse fate than even folly deserves."

"Come," said I doubtfully, "aren't you over-severe?"

"Say what you mean—that I'm jealous," said Miss Hope, facing me, and snapping her fingers expressively. "Perhaps I am—fiercely jealous sometimes—and I'll tell you why. Not because Annie's admired, but because *they* admire her for qualities she hasn't the ghost of. Her art—and there she's mistress, granted—is to throw dust in men's eyes. Just let them stand forward and say, 'It's a little demon, a selfish, cold, scheming, artful, impudent,

affected little puss, who'd put poison in your tea as soon as sugar; but we love her with all our hearts and souls.' Then say I to their hearts and souls, 'Love; and luck go with you.'" Suddenly cooling, or checked by a belated impulse of prudence, she concluded, "Repeat to her what I've said, if you want to—you're welcome. She hates me mortally already."

I remarked that she, Miss Hope, seemed to return the compliment.

"You may say so—when I don't despise her," she returned composedly; "and if I set myself against you at first it was because I supposed you were one of her feather, and safe to follow her lead. But I've watched you, and see you're another sort. Oh, I know her and her like! All the world's her orange, which she would suck dry if she could. Hasn't she given you a taste of her ways—gammoning you by her pretended patronage, an excuse for pocketing your salary, whilst she makes you her slave at home and her butt here? Isn't it so? Speak the truth."

It was useless to mince matters with this eccentric lady.

"I'll not complain," I said; "but as soon as I saw I couldn't stay with her as her friend, I made up my mind to separate before I became her enemy. We part company at the end of the season."

Miss Hope laughed. "That you don't," she said, "for she goes with me to Plymstone, and so shall you, if you will. Slater's right; the rascal generally is. I'll engage you at once, for thirds at all events. You shan't be a dummy, either. Shakespeare—let me see—'Merry Wives'—Anne Page. Why, you're born to play Anne Page. 'So you look sweetly and speak softly.'"

"And say nothing!" I replied dolorously. She laughed again and reminded me:

"First you've to learn how to say it. I'll teach you what I can myself. Come to me to-morrow at twelve. The Chestnuts, Delta Place, St. John's Wood."

I went out of her eccentric presence consoled and cheerful. That was a red-letter evening for me after all. I might or might not have made a hit in my acting, but it appeared I had made something better—a friend—my first. I must not boast of the favour to Annie; the mere mention of my appointment next morning at breakfast put her so violently out of temper, that I believe if she didn't break with me then and there, it was simply because she wanted a cheque cashed for her in the City, and had nobody else to send.

At noon, punctually, I was at Miss Hope's.

The Chestnuts, a low-built house, unnoticeable from the road, stood apart in a walled garden of some extent, whose limes and sycamores pleasantly overshadowed the highway. The lodge gates stood open, I walked up to the front door and rang gently.

"Go away!" was the peremptory response my summons pro-

voked from the area. I thought I would risk a second ring first, whereupon a charwoman crept cautiously out to reconnoitre, and seeing me, hurried to the door and apologized.

"Beg pardon, miss, I'm sure. I made certain it was yonder young scaramouch," pointing to a swarthy, plaintive-looking Italian statuette-seller hanging about the drive. My puzzled expression moved her to add, confidentially, with a sigh, "You don't know the missis, I see. Them Italian beggars will make a beggar of herself one of these days. They get over her with their heathen jabber past all belief; and, bless you, we should have all Hatton Garden here of a morning if it wasn't for me."

She shuffled upstairs, leaving me in the lobby; not alone, for a large tawny Russian bulldog burst out of the next room with alacrity to keep me company—threatening to spring upon me. It was only his fun, I presumed; but his half-sullen, half-savage appearance left ugly doubts. He bayed and showed his teeth when I patted him, and seized my skirt in his jaws when I let him alone. I was unutterably relieved to hear human footsteps descending the stairs.

It was not the old charwoman, but a young, a very young-looking man. Seeing the dog was worrying me, he collared it just as if it were a sheep, and like a sheep it submitted, to my great wonder. As I thanked him warmly—I never felt so grateful to a fellow-creature in my life—I was struck by his downcast expression; struck, too, by something resolute and straight-minded in his English young face, which made me feel quite sorry for his trouble, whatever it was. Probably Miss Hope was in a temper. "My turn next," thought I, when summoned presently, and walked up, ready to apologize for keeping my appointment.

"Bless you, my child," thus she greeted me cordially, "for delivering me from that man!" She looked really as glad as had I to be delivered from that dog of hers. "He's the fourth that's come worrying me this morning. Lovers? No, my dear, amateurs soliciting engagements in my company. The first wanted to play Hamlet. I told him he had a very good broad comedy face, and that settled him. Number two was a lawyer in disgrace, with the impudence to imagine our profession might yet be graced by his services! The third offered me a round sum down for leading business. I showed him the door. A fourth—oh, I'd not the patience left to hear him out. What was it? Quarrelled with his father, had his allowance stopped, young Hopeful comes to me for remunerative employment. I'll see no more, I vow. Am I a State-workshop? Sit down, child, I want to hear *you*." She had walked to the window, to close it. Catching sight of the Neapolitan image-seller lifting his cap with eloquent pantomime below, she flung out alms with a liberality to appal a Charity Organization Committee, then turned back to me with a half-laugh, "They

say my weak point is beggars; English I sometime resist, but when they beg in Italian, I'm done for."

Miss Hope's study—a strong contrast to Annie's boudoir—was frankly masculine in style and appointments. Not to count the cigars—men's monopoly still in those days—pistols, deadly-looking steel weapons, ancient and modern, decorated the walls, and rapiers lay on the table. She had now and then a fancy to play Romeo, and fenced to admiration. From the myriads of play-books strewn around, she picked out the "Sheep in Wolf's Clothing," remarking:

"I've a notion that your line, if you have one, will lie in domestic drama. Do you know the part of Anne Carew?"

Spending, as I did, all my leisure in getting up first rôles in tragedy and comedy impartially, I knew by heart every line of Anne Carew.

Timid, stiff, and stupid, I began. Poor dabbler, I needed the boards, the scenery, the footlights, the dress, the actors, the audience, to create the illusion, and without them never a sentence would come with a natural tone. She got impatient, snatched the words out of your mouth, showed you how to do it—if you could. Standing there on the hearthrug, in a serge wrapper, with her gaping pupil for a listener, she had the whole kingdom of emotion at command; accent, emphasis, action, and expression coming as by enchantment, as she rang the changes on all the passions, slaves to her lamp and her ring. From one part and one play she passed to another and another, giving pithy instructions, illustrating them herself, grudging you nothing that art had taught her—perhaps not very much in her case. To set a splendid example before you was the whole of her teaching, and, self-taught, she could conceive no other of any worth.

The door-bell rang, Cerberus bayed below. Miss Hope set her teeth just like the dog. "Seize him, Tiger!" she said. "Gentleman amateur number five. I'll not see him." Suddenly recollecting herself, and changing to a laugh, "What am I thinking of? It's Francis Gifford, come to read his new play to me and two of 'ours.' You stay," she added, to me. "It's all in the way of experience."

The reading was to come off in the sitting-room below. There we were joined almost immediately by Mr. Edwin Davenant, accompanied by a tall, spare, oldish-looking being, with a wrinkled mournful countenance, only a degree less doleful than that of my late employer, the curate of St. Hilary's.

It was Beattie Graves, the comedian, Davenant's junior by nearly a quarter of a century; but the conscientious, studied, continuous personation of the antique—feeble old men, gouty uncles, eccentric fathers—had so prematurely aged his appearance, furrowed his face, and told on his gait, voice, and gesture, that the sight of Davenant and him together made you think Time an

arbitrary distinction, and the pair were nicknamed "Evergreen Edwin" and "Granny Graves," by the facetious in the company. Concerning the latter, none—not even himself—knew precisely how far his melancholy and misanthropy were assumed, how far genuine. But it was a relief to know for certain he was not the blighted being he appeared to be. The clever and lucky young actor was also, I had learnt, happily married to a charming wife whom he adored, and who, though a great invalid and mostly confined to the sofa, was the most cheerful and contented of mortals.

Miss Hope's visitors three looked surprised—politely surprised—to see me.

"Miss Adams has become my pupil; she has just taken her first lesson," she stated briefly but significantly. It stamped my passport of admission to the company, among which hitherto I had moved only on sufferance.

"Now to business," said Miss Hope, as we sat in a circle with the author and his roll of manuscript in the midst. "I know no more of this play than you do yourselves," she added to the actors. "Not so much as its nature or its name. Now, Mr. Gifford, enlighten us, please."

"'Under the Greenwood Tree.' A rustic drama in four tableaux," he read out. She nodded approval.

"Good. The period?"

"Early in the century."

"Very good. The costume is liked. Short waists, puffed sleeves, mob-caps, etcetera. Place?"

"Dialect-land," said he generally. "North or south country. I give my rustics the choice. I rely upon that for the comic element."

"Principal characters?"

"May, a village heroine; Lionel, a young squire; and Edward—called Zed for short—the orphan son of a gamekeeper and a gipsy wife."

"Miss Torrens, Davenant, and myself, I understand," supplied Miss Hope. "Now all we want to know is what we've to say and to do. Fire away."

Mr. Gifford did as requested, Miss Hope pulling him up once or twice a page, with some pertinent question or comment.

A play read is like a song unsung. Only an adept can judge of it, and he may judge wrong. But even to me, and even then, so much was clear, that "Under the Greenwood Tree" stood or fell by the character of Zed, the gipsy boy, on whose love, jealousy, hatred, revenge, and remorse depended plot and passion. The reading ended, the reader looked inquiringly and intently at Miss Hope, who had listened throughout with a concentrated attention in itself expressive of her energetic nature. After some minutes' reflection:

"Yes," she said, "I believe we can make a good thing of it. It's not so very strong anywhere; but neither is it weak in any point. If it had to rough it against wind and tide, I won't say, but I think, brought out as I hope to bring it out at Plymstone, it will be a success."

Mr. Gifford heard the verdict with quiet but evident satisfaction. There seemed to be further matters of business to discuss. It was the proper moment for me to take leave, and I went.

When I told Annie I was engaged for the summer performances at Plymstone, she looked for a moment like the spiteful fairy in a pantomime; but when she spoke, it was only to say:

"See that your agreement's in order, that's all. Miss Hope's not over-particular about paying, you know; and some say she's over head and ears in debt now." Suddenly changing to a tone of plaintive entreaty, as her eye fell upon a parcel, "See, Lizzie darling, the silk mittens they've sent me—what a bad match for my dress! Be an angel, and go to Howell and James and change them. You're always to be trusted to get the right thing. And by the way, you might call for my shoes at Shoolbred's, and leave these gloves at the cleaner's, in Cavendish Square."

"Annie," said I solemnly, "I'll do my best, this time. But recollect the notice I've given you. When we come back from the country, you must find another lady-help. I'm not strong enough, dear, for the place."

She laughed. "Please yourself," she said; "but be a good child now, and run. I couldn't wear those mittens, now could I? Magenta! and a cardinal dress!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE ITINERANTS.

IT was ten o'clock on a July morning, not many weeks later. Outside Paddington station I stood, stranded, amid four good-sized boxes, looking round vainly for a porter with a sense of duty, when a four-wheeled cab, heavily laden as my own had been, drew up, and from it alighted the long meagre figure of our comic genius, Beattie Graves.

"You are early," he observed with marked surprise. "Miss Torrens is not constitutionally punctual."

"No, but she is prudent," I explained, "and took the precaution of sending her luggage in advance."

"Aye, with you to look after it. 'Mind and see them labelled for me and all that, Lizzie, there's a dear,'" he said, mimicking Annie's coaxing, kittenish way to a nicety.

"What brings you so early?" I asked in my turn.

"Evergreen Edwin takes two hours to dress in the morning," he

replied, "and persuaded me to go ahead with his traps. 'It's all in your way, old man, no trouble; just call and pick them up and take them along with yours,'" reproducing Davenant's drawl and finikin manner, then adding in his own grave, caustic tones, "Fact is, both Edwin and Angelina prefer hansoms. So do I, and so do you."

"See what comes of being good-natured," said I, in his own vein.

"But I'm ill-natured," he protested; "Edwin I mean to pay out. Sit down, Miss Adams, don't worry about those packing-cases; the little one's yours; I'll see to it specially." And having pressed a company's servant into his service he disappeared with the luggage into the booking-office, whilst I watched the principals arrive: Miss Hope in her private hansom; then Davenant; then Gifford; the former looking as fresh as the rose in his button-hole, trim irreproachable, gait elastic. No candle-light Adonis. He might have stepped out of that cab straight on to the boards, as some opera hero—Elvino, Fernando, Lorenzo—in modern morning dress. Last appeared Annie. She was still "financing" with the cab-driver when Graves came out of the office.

Going up to Davenant, with a serious face that imposed upon me—though forewarned—at first sight, he touched his arm, saying:

"My dear fellow, I'm awfully sorry, but I'm afraid one of your many packages has gone astray. The little brown leather case, you know."

"Brown leather case!" Davenant repeated, changing colour as if from a shock. "Where is it? Don't tell me you don't know."

"Left in the cab, I expect. Can't find it anywhere," and he shrugged his shoulders, the picture of helpless resignation. "But good gracious, how you look! ready to faint! What's inside? Only collars and that sort of thing? Nothing to tempt the cupidity of the driver?"

"Driver he ——! I must recover that case. I can't start without it."

"Only five minutes more," said Mr. Graves, taking out his watch and shaking his head. "You've not time."

"The devil! Graves, what a careless chap you are!"

"I'd such a collection to look after," the other represented. "Whilst I was attending to your hat-box, and your Gladstone bag, and your rapier-case, somebody must have walked off with the brown one."

"Walked off with it!" gasped Davenant, horrified afresh.

"Why, what can it contain so precious?" Graves inquired innocently.

"Stage-properties," muttered Davenant, turning away with a shade of embarrassment.

These "properties," Mr. Graves knew well, were irresistible Edwin's toilet requisites; mysterious phials, fragrant essences and

preparations, combs, powders, shifting looking-glasses; delicate aids to him in that art of self-preservation in which he was master.

Up and down the platform he walked, in misery and despair.

"I'll go and tell Gifford you can't start without your 'means of grace,'" said Mr. Graves suddenly. "He'll find you a later train, and you can join us down there."

"No, no," cried Davenant, well aware of the torrent of sarcasm that would thus be let loose upon his head.

"It's a shame to tease him any more," I whispered to his tormentor, who was good-natured, I knew, in spite of his sincere assertions to the contrary.

He rubbed his forehead, started, looked round, exclaiming, "Ha—Eureka!" and striding off to a dark corner, from behind a market-woman's basket he extracted the missing treasure, adding naively, "Why, now I recollect, I put it there myself."

Davenant pounced on it like a bird on her lost young. He never let it go out of his hand for the remainder of the journey, but discretion forbade him to resent the practical joke.

Our compartment held eight, but we six tacitly conspired to ward off intruders. At the first danger-signal Graves' form lay outstretched on the seat, muffled in rugs, his head in a shawl, whilst the others cast commiserating glances at the invalid old lady he personated to the life, giving shrill querulous calls for salts, scents, handkerchiefs, instantly tendered by Miss Hope. Passengers looked in, and promptly retreated, declining such sorry company.

Once out of the station, a change came—such as comes over Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke's cupboard when the lights go out. Spirits, imps of mischief, were let loose, and ran wild. Beattie Graves and Miss Hope were the ringleaders, Annie the loudest in the romp. Davenant began reciting mock-heroic verses, then took out his rapier and was fighting a burlesque duel with Gifford when the train drew up at Swindon.

The guard, coming to call to order, found the same sad and sober company as at Paddington; the hysterical lady-invalid petitioning for a glass of water, which he compassionately brought for a shilling.

At Bath, the next stoppage, an elderly gentleman, attracted, I believe, by Annie's gay bonnet at the window, rashly set his mind upon the vacant seat among us, and forced his way in, with an aggressive, fussy, dictatorial manner that decided his fate. The contingency had been provided for beforehand.

He was a church dignitary, an archdeacon, so accustomed to petty dominion that perhaps he forgot we were not the inferior clergy of his diocese. He began by ordering Gifford, who was smoking, to put out his cigarette, and Davenant to move his hand-packages, which were in nobody's way. They obeyed.

Our party had split into three, strangers to each other: Annie

and Davenant, man and wife ; I was Miss Hope's travelling companion ; Graves and Gifford, side by side, appeared to belong together.

Presently the former began shifting his position restlessly, then muttering brokenly to himself. The archdeacon looked up askance, naturally astonished, but, seeing no one else take notice, made no remark.

Quite suddenly Graves, rolling his eyes, pushing back his hat, and ruffling his hair, sprang to his feet, with an appearance of the wildest disorder, and shouted aloud :

" Out on ye, owls ! Nothing but songs of death !
There, take thou that,"

striking the air violently.

" Good heavens ! " cried the clergyman, starting up aghast. " What's this ? "

" Don't alarm yourself, pray," said Gifford aside to him tranquilly, adding as Graves had resumed his seat, still muttering, " This gentleman is a sufferer from mental derangement, but I am responsible for him, and he is safe in my keeping. Railway travelling sometimes excites him, but till now he has been perfectly well-behaved," appealing to us for corroboration, which we instantly gave, but without mitigating the archdeacon's disgust.

" How very improper ! " he exclaimed. " How can any railway company sanction so grave a risk ? "

" I explained everything to these ladies and this gentleman," Gifford returned, " and allayed their fears. By complying with my suggestions they have materially assisted in keeping him quiet, besides showing the utmost sympathy for his misfortune," he added significantly.

" In common humanity, who could do less ? " put in Miss Hope.

" Pity you made me put out that cigar," Gifford continued. " Smoke acts as a sedative."

" Pray re-light it," entreated the victim, trembling visibly with fear and indignation, yet loth to be outdone in " common humanity " by the first comers.

" Is he ever violent ? " inquired Miss Hope with solicitude.

" Very rarely ; but then it takes three of us to hold him."

" And you call that safe ? " uttered the divine, terror-stricken, for Graves had got hold of a walking-stick and was making feint passes therewith in the prebendary's direction.

" It would only irritate him to use force," whispered Gifford, seeming presently to get the weapon by stealth from his charge, who sank back in a corner, pretending to doze.

" He seems quiet now," ventured our reverend companion nervously.

" Yes." Gifford was watching his patient attentively. " It is

most unlikely that one of his fits will come on ; still, it is best to be careful. Especially when he wakes, ladies and gentlemen, he may ask you odd questions or to do odd things. If so, humour him ; for then he's as gentle as a lamb."

We were all watching him with genuine interest. By-and-by he began stretching himself, gazing vacantly around, then extended his hand to Miss Hope, who took it and shook it cordially.

Then he chose a peach from the lunch-basket, and gave it me, saying :

"Eat it," and I ate it accordingly.

Next, taking a cigarette from his case, he presented it to the archdeacon.

"Smoke it," he said peremptorily.

"Humour him," whispered Gifford rapidly and persuasively.

"It's first-rate Latakia, and very mild."

He complied—protestingly murmuring to himself, "Not for forty years," as he lit the match, fearfully watching his antagonist the while, who, after the first few whiffs, seemed pacified and smilingly composed himself to sleep again.

"That will do," said his keeper. "You may put it out. He won't notice."

"Better not risk it," the archdeacon opined, and finished his cigarette with evident relish. It lasted him till Bristol station, where he quickly alighted, so impressed, I fancy, by our show of unselfish pity for our afflicted fellow-traveller that he hesitated to lodge his complaint, and departed to thrill the company at dinner that night with the story of his railway adventure.

We laughed ourselves tired and hoarse, reckless of the hard work in store for our limbs and our lungs at Plymstone, a returning sense of which, however, as we neared our destination, spread depression over the wildest spirits.

Plymstone is a place out of which has sprouted a watering-place twice the size of the parent tree. The place is pretty ; the watering-place is not ; the place is old ; the watering-place is brand-new, but already so popular as to rival its near neighbour, the fashionable seaside town of Torreville. The watering-place has a "palatial" hotel, the "Métropole ;" the place, a "homely, old-established" inn, the "Swan." "A distinction without a difference, except in the breadth of the frontage and the length of the bill," said Mr. Gifford, a native of these parts, and who knew the ground well. Arrangements had been made for our whole party to lodge at the "Swan," to which, moreover, the theatre was annexed, communicating with it by a passage. It stood pleasantly on the skirts of the little town, by the roadside, a quarter of a mile from the sea. Amid the fields and park-land behind it rose at no great distance a large, eccentric-shaped conspicuous red-brick building I took for the waterworks. It was The Lees, the house of Mr. Danvers, the Plymstone Cræsus.

At the "bar" within sat a barmaid mending a pair of trunk hose, presumably the property of some of the "responsible utility"—a homely, professional touch. But besides the numerous business letters for Miss Hope, exposed in a glass case, two envelopes invited our notice, addressed respectively to the Marquis of Borderdale and the Earl of Mount Tassel.

"So-ho! Lord Mount Tassel," read out Davenant airily, twirling his moustache, "I know the fellow. He saw my Claude Melnotte, and said some very complimentary things about it."

"Coming down to see you act!" sighed Annie enviously.

Gifford laughed aloud, and just then a "homely, old-established" looking landlord appeared to receive us.

"At your old tricks, Mudge," said Gifford, adding, to us, "He puts a circular inside those envelopes, directs and posts them himself, then puts them up there to endorse his advertisements of the "Swan" as frequented by the nobility. Isn't it so, Mudge?" The innkeeper only chuckled complacently.

"At your old jokes, Mr. Gifford. Now what would the ladies like to order for dinner?"

"You draw the bill of fare, Gifford," said Miss Hope. "You know the house."

Mr. Gifford proceeded to draw it in the negative:

"None of your soup, Mudge, flavoured with essence of tin; none of your sprats that have been to Billingsgate and back; nor yet an underdone joint, nor a clammy tart; no salads of yesterday; no——"

"Good heavens! Gifford, we shall starve," Graves interrupted.

"What's left over but bread and cheese?"

"I'll do my best, ladies and gentlemen," Mr. Mudge promised.

"Meantime, I think they're waiting for you on the stage."

"Merry Wives," mark you, was to be played to-morrow. Already the whole house was bought out. Cheered by this intelligence, we passed on to the theatre, where a continuous rehearsal had been going on since ten in the morning. Confusion, nevertheless, as the Irishman put it, was the order of the day, and that the comedy should be performed to-morrow seemed, short of a miracle, impossible. Though the rank and file had been drilling for a month, and the principals were perfect in their parts, stage-business, dresses, scenery, all was chaos. But the law of stage-creation seems to be that perfect order before the curtain, should come out of a general muddle behind it. Miss Hope was well practised in such miracle-working, and brought to it special powers of her own. Her zest communicated itself to the dullest in the troupe. From Page's garden to Herne's Oak, each scene was rehearsed with extraordinary care and intelligence. It was seven o'clock before the toilers were released, and six weary and ravenous players sank down on six chairs round the dining-table of the "Swan."

"I could eat a flat-iron!" declared Miss Hope; and she spoke for us all.

"You may have to, or its equivalent," prophesied Mr. Gifford, as the first course was brought in. "Soup—you know it from hot water by the tureen."

The fish we were too hungry to quarrel with. The next dish excited a storm, and Mr. Mudge was summoned to be sermonized.

"Did I not warn you," began Gifford magisterially, "that if you did not make us the exception to prove your rule of illtreatment of your customers we should remove to the 'Métropole'? Try to eat a rag doll, but not this old fowl; and I'm an Australian, Mudge, if this is fresh mutton."

"It's as good a fowl as ever had its neck wrung," the accused protested; "and as for the mutton—well, the 'Métropole' had the hind-quarter and I the fore; so you'd get no change of diet, sir, if you did move."

"You're in league, then, to rob and poison the public." And as the rebuke failed to make the slightest impression on the obtuse self-satisfaction of Mr. Mudge, who persisted in taking it for a joke, Gifford added, "Well, I shall complain to my friend Mr. Danvers. He has room for us all at The Lees."

This threat told. The host withdrew, then re-appeared, bearing some excellent cream-cheeses, "just come in," he asserted.

"Which means set aside for family consumption," Mr. Gifford remarked, adding almost before the offender was gone, "an inn-keeper is like the walnut-tree, etcetera, in the proverb. The worse you treat him the better he treats you."

We did not sit long over the crumbs. Mr. Gifford proposed a stroll on the beach, and the motion was carried by a majority.

"Is it far?" asked Annie, dubiously.

"I hope not," said Davenant with a yawn.

"We'll get you bath-chairs if you're tired," returned Gifford. "Come along," and, not caring to be left behind, along they came accordingly.

Country-bred as I was, my heart jumped up at the sight of the country's commonest objects—the hedges, the field flowers, the swallows—but I dared not show it, so far seemed the rest from all sympathy. Miss Hope, all extremes and whims, detested the country but worshipped the sea, and made straight for the sands. Here Annie differed; she thought the sea was only created to lead up to a parade, or an admirer's yacht. She made us stop to rest on every bench; she was wretched, for she felt the salt breeze taking the curl out of her feathers and her front hair. Davenant complained of the cold. The others twitted him about his care of his complexion and pressed me to lend him my veil. Graves looked curiously at each rustic object, the sheep browsing on the green, the large red kine in the meadows, as at so many bits of ultra-stage realism. Our walk led us along the sands, which

extend for eight miles towards Torreville, under red sandstone cliffs, till Plymstone was out of sight round a point, and Annie declared herself half-dead and unable to stir another step. She was really pale with the exertion of walking half a mile. I had known her faint for less. The gentlemen crowded round her in concern.

"Fudge!" said Miss Hope aside to me. "She's an iron constitution, or she'd be in her grave by now. Not one of those men could outlive what she subjects herself to to keep up that diminutive waist and those Chinese feet, and her silly, heavy dresses make every movement a strain! Glad to see you don't go in for the sylph style."

Annie revived quickly, as she reposed on a cloak, smelling her salts. Miss Hope flung herself down on the shingle and lit a cigarette, in which the gentlemen joined her; Graves, before venturing to sit, eyeing the sand askance.

"It won't bite," suggested Gifford. "What are you afraid of?"

"Caterpillars—noisome things in general. Well, here goes!" and he threw himself down with a heroic air. The spot was inviting for a halt. Red cliffs sheltered us, with turf above lipping over the cliff's brink, and thick daisy tufts and ferns growing on their ledges. Before us spread the smooth, scarce-dimpling sea, and the light summer haze filling the air merged sea and sky in one soft grey expanse.

"Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,"

so Gifford began declaiming, on a sudden, between his cigar-whiffs,

"Is not this life more sweet
Than that of painted pomp?"

"I'm not prepared to say so," answered Graves readily. "Painted pomp is an experiment in living I should like to try."

"Are not these sands,"

continued Gifford as before,

"More free from peril than the envious court?"

"Don't you be sure," said Davenant, who was anything but happy; "there are slimy curiosities about that I dread."

"And I never feel safe on the beach with the tide coming in," confessed Annie uncomfortably. Miss Hope, in a brown study, had the fancy to consider the point in earnest.

"Country life is not for us players," she affirmed. "Shakespeare died at Stratford—he couldn't live there. Out of town we're not really wanted, and the moment I get there I feel like a coin out of the country where it's current."

"I too," Beattie Graves chimed in. "Give me London, Manchester, or New York."

"There we are somebodies," Miss Hope continued. "See the people flock in out of the squalid streets reeking with mud and fog, scrambling, thirsting, famishing for what we can give them; be it two hours' merriment to the overworked business man, a glimpse of fairyland to the artizan from the slums, a taste of reality to artificial men and women of fashion. Here, where life is more even and natural, they can do without us; so we're depreciated. I feel it at once."

Perhaps we all felt it. We sat silent and grave. Miss Hope, half mechanically, began taking shots at a black bottle imbedded in the shingle. The still warm air was almost oppressive, and the little shimmering waves fell softly and evenly over on the beach with a dreamy murmur, lulling like a cradle song.

"What's wrong with the sea?" Graves asked, looking up from the caricatures he was drawing on the sand. "Or is it my eyes that are possessed?" carefully wiping his glasses and readjusting them.

The sea was shining as if a thousand glow-worms were riding the surface, every tiny wave as it curled broke in a glittering shower.

"Phosphorescent," said Mr. Gifford, adding suddenly, "I could tell you a legend of the deep here."

"Don't," cried Annie, nervously.

"Do," said Miss Hope. "It might work into a drama. I doubt if a phosphorescent sea has ever been put upon the stage."

"The story goes," he resumed, "that here once stood a village, which was submerged by the sea. Fishermen, in a calm like this, have seen through the waves the tops of church-spires, and sea-divers heard the ringing of bells in the abyss."

Even as he spoke, a chime-like strain of music, coming from sea or shore beyond the jutting cliffs to our left, fell on our ears with a sound to which distance lent strangeness, and, for one instant, enchantment.

"The dirges of the drowned," said Mr. Graves sepulchally.

Annie sprang up with a hysterical scream. "I shall go home. I can't stay here."

But she dared not stir alone, and no one volunteered to be her escort. We were all listening attentively.

"The chime sounds gay," Davenant remarked, "more like a dance than a dirge."

"I don't care," said Annie, "the sands are haunted."

A chorus of laughter interrupted her. The music had ceased.

"Here comes your ghost," said Mr. Gifford, as a dark figure slowly rounded the headland. "A rascally Italian accordion player from Torreville, as I live! Tramp and mendicant, avaunt! I will none of you."

"For shame! Tramp yourself!" Miss Hope promptly rebuked him. Her incorrigible benevolence seemed well known, for no one ventured to expostulate as she beckoned to the man to approach, which he was ready to do without invitation.

A more characteristic specimen of the tribe never wiled the pence out of your pocket than this roughly picturesque tatterdemalion, with his brown, mulatto-like skin, shock of curling black hair, bold, bright, gleaming eyes, and white teeth, as to her kindly inquiries he replied with a volley of soft sounds to us not clearly intelligible. "Neapolitan dialect," said Miss Hope. But in lisped, broken English, helped out by vivid pantomime, he gave her his story of a ruined noble family, a patriot who beggared himself for his country, and died, leaving his children—among whom the winsome petitioner—penniless.

Already Miss Hope was feeling for her purse.

"Can you believe a word of it?" asked Gifford, regarding her with curiosity. Davenant was stifling a laugh.

"I believe he wants this more than I do," she replied, flinging half a sovereign from her portemonnaie to the lucky itinerant, who was profuse in bows and smiling thanks, then decamped, calling on Santa Lucia and singing in guttural snatches the praises of blessed, beautiful Naples.

"He prefers Seven Dials for head-quarters, and no wonder," remarked Graves. "It's not by the Mediterranean he can hope to pick up gold pieces on the beach."

The passing intrusion of the foreigner had broken the spell of the lonely sands. We became aware that we were tired out, that the rehearsal was to-morrow at nine, and that the sooner to sleep, the sooner the better for us and the play.

CHAPTER VII.

MERRY MUMMERS OF PLYMSTONE.

You who hold that Shakespeare's plays are better suited for the study than for the stage, can never have passed from a private reading to a public representation of the "Merry Wives of Windsor," that most magnificent of farces, Shakespeare's single comedy of English life and manners. What is good Master Justice Shallow, what his cousin, the "softly-sprited, wee-faced, wee yellow-bearded" Slender, what Parson Hugh, the Welshman, Caius, the French physician, or fair Mistress Anne, in print, compared to their living figures on the stage, where they afford contrasts as striking to the eye as to the mind? Young Fenton exists only as a contrast, in his holiday, lover-like trim and grace, to the oddity and ill-favour of Anne's other suitors. Here are a dozen minor acting parts so good that it is difficult to

fail in any one. Match that who can in another man's play. Did Shakespeare himself ever so crowd so small a canvas, and with figures so vivid and distinct?

Anne Page was my first Shakesperian part. Juliet, the Prince of Denmark himself, never received deeper study. "The dinner is on the table." "The dinner attends you." "Will it please your worship to walk in?" I pondered a hundred ways of pronouncing each precious phrase. Should Anne be meek and submissive, or betray impatience? Should she show herself a consummate hypocrite, or clearly be laughing in her sleeve at the booby Slender? Was Shakespeare's Anne a quiet coquette, or a plain-sailing girl, bent on taking her own way without talking about it? Thus I hammered away, trying to strike new lights to illumine the character of Page's daughter.

"Given to melancholy and musing," says Dame Quickly; then the question arises how far that garrulous busybody was a judge of character. Anne's intimacy with her in itself opens up a world of speculation. The name Anne—that of Shakespeare's own wife—struck me as more than a coincidence. My theory is that we have here the story of his courtship, and material to reconstruct his domestic history. The sharp-tongued Mrs. Page is no doubt a portrait of his mother-in-law. In Anne's rejected suitors he burlesqued his own rivals in love. If you pore long enough over almost any line, half a dozen hidden meanings start out; just as, by staring at the fire, you get to see faces and landscapes in the hot coals. Why, I could have written a volume on the character of Anne Page alone, containing discoveries to astonish even Shakespeare societies. The least I would do should be to give an entirely novel and original reading of the part.

Our opening night went off like a sky-rocket, with startling brilliancy. Miss Hope and Miss Torrens were happily matched as the two Merry Wives. Annie, as Mrs. Ford, was an excellent "get-up," and that was all; but it was enough; Shakespeare did the rest. Charlotte, as Mrs. Page, the leading spirit, all mischief, shrewd sense, and good-nature, set off her pretty, faintly-sentimental neighbour, and was set off by her; their very faults doing good service, as faults not seldom do.

But the hero of the night was Davenant, whose Ford took his warmest admirers, including himself, by surprise. He gave what he called a "serious reading" of the part; and his tragic jealousy proved vastly more mirth-provoking than Falstaff in love. His passionate soliloquy excited a storm of applause, and peals of laughter withal that puzzled him. So also, behind the scenes, the hearty compliments paid him were turned in a way of which he could make nothing.

"Capital, my dear fellow," affirmed Gifford—"superb!" Davenant's face dilated. "Side-splitting!" His countenance fell.

"Excellent," Miss Hope declared, adding innocently, "Never saw more fun got out of the part in my life."

He looked uncomfortable, but wisely decided that laurels fairly won, though not as you intended, may always be becomingly worn, and played on with the humour he owed to his lack of all sense of the humorous. Graves, as Falstaff, was scarcely less successful. The grain of irony came to him naturally: for the knight's joviality, his paunch and the letter of his part must suffice. In spite of the shortcomings of the Torreville supers, one of whom gave us a Frenchman who spoke broad Yorkshire, and was clearly afraid of his rapier, the play went with extraordinary spirit, without hitch or hesitation, from the opening scene to the fantastic *finale* under Herne's Oak, and the song and dance of the fairies, under the presidency of myself as their queen.

Though not by all my taking thought could I add one syllable to the part of Anne, and nobody, maybe, discovered I was giving it a new and student-like interpretation, I felt as excited and exhausted when all was over as if I had been acting every one else's part as well as my own. The success of the comedy was tremendous, and it was announced for repetition the following night.

As I stood in the dressing-room, not displeased with my fairy queen's reflection in the glass, and in no hurry to get out of my finery, a message came to me from head-quarters:

"Don't change. We are to go off to supper immediately, with Mr. Danvers, at The Lees."

A little extempore welcome, it appeared, offered to us six Londoners by the art-patron of Plymstone. In the lobby of the "Swan" we assembled, the only sanely-attired persons being Mr. Gifford and myself, whose white silk array might pass for ordinary evening dress. Falstaff had merely doffed his paunch and stag's horns; the three others were in their play guise, of sixteenth century Windsor burgesses.

"I suppose you know the way, Mr. Gifford?" said Annie consolately. "I do think your friend Mr. Danvers might have sent his carriage. I hear he keeps three."

"In the stables," Mr. Gifford explained. "He always walks everywhere himself, though he is lame, and it seldom occurs to him to order out the horses, except for exercise. But we shall be there in five minutes. Shooting stars, asphalte paths, moonlight on the waves, gossamers on the grass, and a millionaire waiting for you on his doorstep—with champagne and oysters on his table—at the other end. Come, Miss Torrens. Come, Ford, man, give your wife your arm, and follow me." And he led off with Miss Hope. Davenant, never so happy as when in Elizabethan costume (his doublet, slashed sleeves, sword, and buckles made another and a younger man of him), followed with Annie in charge, Falstaff and I bringing up the rear; a gay, motley procession,

to which, however, the silent, sober mood of tired and hungry actors after an arduous performance gave a funereal touch. Beattie Graves spoke first. It was to tell us that the portion of the park we were traversing occupied the site of an ancient burial-ground

Annie shuddered "As if it wasn't enough to have to risk one's life in the night air, that you must talk about dead men's ghosts to terrify one!"

"Miss Hope," said Gifford abruptly, "can't you get Welsh Sir Hugh to make a ghost in good earnest of that donkey from Torreville, who plays—I should say, brays—the French doctor? I'd change the stage rapiers for real ones with pleasure. I could have turned him out and played it myself."

"I only wish you would," sighed Miss Hope devoutly.

A tradition lurked in the troupe that Mr. Gifford was a "born actor," who, if only he had chosen, might have outshone us all. But his reputation, of "the man who could do anything if he tried," he was careful, he openly admitted, not to forfeit by trying. He laughed and declined, adding, "Is there no way to abolish Caius?"

"Well, I'll turn him into one of the fairies," said Miss Hope, "and try the hobgoblin in the part. He can't be worse."

Already we were nearing The Lees. Three gorgeous-liveried footmen met us in the colonnade, took our cloaks in charge, and politely waited till our backs were turned to laugh at our fantastic array. I thought their mirth unfair, since we did not laugh at their own habiliments, not a whit less irrational. An elderly, undersized, stout personage, in plain clothes, with stiff grey hair standing erect on the crown of his head, whom I took for the steward, came bustling into the hall. It was Mr. Danvers, the millionaire.

"All that money for that little man? Monstrous!" quick-whispered Graves in my ear. "How iniquitous is the distribution of wealth in this country!"

Now I should have said there was such a hopeless insignificance about Mr. Danvers' personality, that only an enormous balance at his banker's could even so far have put him on an equality with the average of his fellow-creatures as to get them to recognize his existence. Napoleon was short, Socrates was ugly, Byron was lame, Mr. Danvers was all three; but that was not it. Beattie Graves had no right to grudge him his colossal fortune, for he would never have changed places with the owner of it, I know, if for that he must change persons too. For the rest, he seemed a good-natured gentleman, all respect to Miss Hope, gallantry to Miss Torrens; even for me he had his compliment ready, quoting from Justice Shallow, whom he partly resembled:

"Fair mistress Anne, I would I were young again for your sake;"

and as the thing was impossible there seemed no harm in giving a silent, smiling acquiescence.

The doors opposite were thrown open, disclosing his large, overlighted, heavily-curtained bachelor's dining-room, costly and inelegant, with bronze and marble ornaments, and a supper-table plentifully spread.

"So do-nothing Dives fares sumptuously every day," whispered Graves again, "whilst we workers starve on crusts."

That was a figure of speech; the fact being that both Dives and Lazarus, when alone, dined on chops.

The supper guests included three besides ourselves; two yachtsmen of title, staying at the "Métropole," elderly younger sons and green-room *habitués*, for neither seemed strangers to Miss Hope, nor likely long to remain strangers to Miss Torrens. The third was a young Mr. Romney. He seemed to be nobody in particular, his place, as such, was next mine at supper, and his face, as our eyes met, I immediately perceived was not quite strange to me.

We waited till the din of talk offered safe cover to our voices, then began shyly, both at the same moment, and, it so happened, with the same words:

"Did we not meet once——"

There we stopped, laughed awkwardly, and looked down at the oysters on our plates. I took courage and finished my sentence:

"On the stairs, at Miss Hope's?"

It was the "fourth amateur"—he who had rescued me from the fangs of Tiger, the house-pet. Perhaps that was why I remembered him so well.

He assented, adding significantly, "I was going down and you were going up;" and he fell upon his oysters and demolished them with a ferocity that was not ferocity of appetite. As on that first occasion, I felt sympathy for his disappointment, a desire to say something encouraging.

"One may draw back in order to take a better leap."

To the sharp inquiring glance my suggestion provoked, I could only reply with a puzzled stare.

"She wouldn't even give me a hearing," he observed by-and-by.

"She says she always advises amateurs against the experiment you wanted to try," said I consolingly.

"The old story, 'Never go into the water till you've learnt to swim,'" he retorted impatiently. "Now, tell me, you who know her as a manageress, will she take none but veterans?"

"She took me," I said. To add "a novice" seemed superfluous.

"Oh—you—" he began, and I shrank, I trembled, I feared, I thought, I *knew* he was going to follow with that flattering allusion to my personal appearance I had come to dread worse than censure, and that after my original, intellectual representation of the part of Anne!

He did not. I thanked him for that in my heart. He merely said, quite simply :

"She may have seen at once that you would make a good actress."

"And then I had nothing to lose, no foot on shore anywhere," I resumed. "So into the sea, to sink or to swim! There's no harm done."

"Is that it?" he struck in with sudden animation. "Then I ought to suit her, as a castaway and an outlaw."

"Why, what can you have done?" I asked, startled.

"Kicked the plank overboard," he said with conviction. "I don't mind telling anybody, I mean you, Miss—"

"Adams," I suggested modestly, as he hesitated.

"Miss Adams, that I'm a deserter, a runaway."

"From what?" I inquired, wondering if the mutineer referred to ship, regiment, school, or college.

"Home," he said.

"Not so foolish as that!" I uttered involuntarily. Was he joking? "Or at least," I went on, as he remained obstinately grave, "it must have been a very unhappy home, or you very unfortunate in your near relations."

"It was they who were very unfortunate in me," he replied, with a serio-comic expression. A sudden lull in the table talk reduced us to silence. We attended to our suppers, glancing up now and then as in natural curiosity on his part to see what a young actress, on mine what a young gentleman amateur, was like.

He was just as unlike any one of Miss Alice's heroes as he could stare. When I say he was English-looking, through and through, I do not mean that he looked a Hercules, broad-shouldered, heavy-witted, the John Bull of a French farce. There are contrasting types equally representative of our island.

James Romney was scarcely over the middle height, and his thin, well-knit figure would never have struck a girl like me as athletic-looking. As a fact, his only claim to distinction at that time lay in his skill in such exercises. His thick crisp brown hair was many shades darker than mine, yet dark none had ever called it; his sunburnt face was manly though anything but rough in its cast; and his clear light blue eyes had something young and serious in their recklessness that gave peculiarity to their expression—an expression, as it were, of a great steadfastness of nature, underlying a decidedly freakish surface. I felt an increasing interest in his fortunes, which I might infer to be low; a melancholy desire to learn what fatal false step had wrecked his career at the start. As the champagne went round a lively general conversation sprang up, like a sudden fresh breeze at sea. It took in all but ourselves, and Graves, my other neighbour, who was remedying the inequalities of the social structure by appropriating a princely supper, that would not have disgraced Falstaff.

his prototype. I made bold to question Mr. Romney about his troubles; I fancied he wanted to talk about them to somebody. If I was wrong, he would soon let me know.

"Where was your home? What is your father?" I asked him.

"My father is Sherwood Romney, of The Mote, Hampshire," he said, with a noble simplicity; very much as if "The Duke of Devonshire, of Chatsworth," had been the reply.

"The Mote," I repeated pensively, as though I were contemplating it in my mind's eye.

"The jolliest old place in the county," he said impetuously. "There's one room where nothing's been changed since Queen Elizabeth's time; and in the hall"—suddenly stopping short, looking grave, and swallowing a piece of bread as if it had turned to stone on the way.

"Had you brothers and sisters?" I inquired.

"Ten in the family," he grimly replied. "But for me that's all past and gone. I shall never see the old place again, nor them, I suppose. They've disowned me. I've no right to complain. It was all my own doing."

I regarded him pityingly, thinking, orphan-fashion, that any home, any parents, above all any brothers and sisters, must be better than none. What a terribly bad scrape it must have been, to cause such a family breach! But the outlaw looked so straightforward, so conscience-free, that my wandering thought escaped me aloud.

"Can you have done anything so wrong that they can't forgive it?"

He laughed out. "I've done nothing wrong—nothing but resolutely refuse to obey my father, Mr. Sherwood Romney's orders."

"That sounds bad enough," I said.

"But it's not so bad as it sounds," he expostulated. "Now look here; Miss Adams," taking four forks and setting them in a row. "Here are we four sons. The eldest has the estate, of course."

"Of course," I responded, as though estates and eldest sons were household words to me.

"Number two, Willoughby, goes into the army. Good. I come next. There's a family living, and they brought me up for the Church, expecting me to step straight from the university into the snug little vicarage opposite our park gates."

"Well," said I, uncompassionately.

"Well, that fell through—I don't quite know how. I know my divinity tutor surprised me one day executing a Chinese dance in full costume. Anyhow a time came when he wrote and told my father I was fit for nothing but to be a clown at Astley's. True, I never got a prize in my life except for gymnastics. Johnny," raising fork number four, "never even got that; but he was a

steady-going fellow, and my father quite rightly decided that he should take orders in my stead, and to provide for me in another way. He took me from college last June, and told me that as it was agreed I shouldn't suit the Church, I was to enter a brewery as pupil who might become partner in time. But that didn't suit me. I wanted to go into the army. That, he declared, he couldn't afford. I said if once I got in, I would live on my pay. He laughed and said Willoughby cost him more than the three of us put together. Then we had a row."

At this point he looked gloomy, but resolute and unrepentant. I could well imagine that Mr. Sherwood Romney was of a determined disposition, and that it ran in the family. After a pause, his son concluded:

"He said he'd given me two chances. I'd lost the first, and must take the second. As I wouldn't, he vowed not to help me with a penny until I gave in. We had some words, and I left home. I wrote that I was not coming back, but would earn my own living. I had the stage in my head, having been three years in the University Dramatic Club. At The Mote they know nothing about that scheme, and think I shall be forced to come home before long, like the prodigal. But I'm not a prodigal, and I shan't come home."

"What shall you do? Apply to Miss Hope again?" I asked.

The question brought a queer twinkle to his eye. At that moment we were interrupted. Supper was over; Annie was engrossing the two noble yachtsmen, Graves eating sugar-plums, as if each were bad and necessitated trying one more. The others had pushed back their chairs into the window alcove, and Mr. Danvers was making signs to us to join the group.

"Miss Hope," he began, "I want to introduce to you my young friend Mr. Romney, who is anxious, I believe, to know if you remember him."

Her memory was shorter than mine, or perhaps only more hard-worked. She bowed, regarding him attentively, but quite at fault. Her eyes fastened curiously on something suspended round his neck by a blue ribbon, something so conspicuous that it must have been worn concealed till now. Impossible to overlook so singular an ornament.

"Pray," she asked, unceremoniously, "what *has* Mr. Romney got round his neck? Is it a decoration?"

He bowed assent, adding, "An order of merit, won yesterday, on the sands. How, and from whom, you may know."

Disengaging the badge, he placed it in her hands. Neither medal, nor locket, nor charm; it was a ten-shilling piece.

It first flashed on me now. Gifford and Davenant seemed in the plot, as well as our host; all were watching Miss Hope with amusement, as she looked from the coin to Mr. Romney, and sought vainly for a trace of the dark, picturesque, voluble

Neapolitan vagabond who had so successfully played on her heart-strings and purse-strings last night.

"You could dare to—to—to serve me such a trick!" There she broke down into peals of laughter, in which we all joined, and which emboldened the culprit to rejoin deferentially:

"Nothing venture, nothing win."

"So *you* are the Sicilian noble, the political exile, the starving patriot?" she ejaculated when she recovered her breath.

"No, but a candidate—for your forgiveness first." He paused, hesitatingly.

"I forgive you. There," she said, holding out her hand.

"And for a place, if it's only a candle snuffer's, in your company."

"Not another word," she cut him short with characteristic decision. "I know what you're going to say. As it happens, I can make you useful at once. Our French doctor has broken down; you shall replace him. Foreign gibberish seems in your line. Come to rehearsal to-morrow, at ten."

James Romney's eyes gleamed with proud satisfaction. I think at that moment he had nothing further to ask of gods or men.

Our directress now rose, saying, with the magnificent stage dignity she could assume on state occasions, and that filled you with admiration, who had seen her smoking a cigarette in *négligé* shortly before, "We must be wishing you good night, Mr. Danvers. We have been trespassing too long on your hospitality."

"Mr. Romney will see you through the park," said our host cheerily, as we bade him farewell in the hall, thanking him profusely for a perfectly delightful evening.

No sooner were we at the bottom of the door-steps than Graves began:

"Now that's what I call a convivial failure. Did you ever in your life eat a better supper, or see a duller supper-party?"

"It's because there were no ladies," said Davenant. "Why couldn't the fellow get some ladies?"

"You hear him!" cried Miss Hope. "Knock him down, Gifford."

"Consider yourself knocked down," said Gifford, "or tell us what you mean."

"Oh, I don't count the family," laughed Davenant. "But he might have asked some of the local gentry to meet us. I suppose they don't visit him. After all, he's only a vulgar *parvenu*."

"Three hundred thousand pounds!" ejaculated Graves. "What has he done to deserve it more than a dock labourer?"

"Less," said Gifford drily. "It would puzzle him to do a dock labourer's work, I fancy."

"A man who never earned a penny in his life," Graves proceeded, "and without the brains or the muscle to earn it, by what right does he loll in luxury and look down on his betters who are slaving for a pittance? Oh, rights of property, falsely called sacred!"

"Danvers is a rare good fellow," spoke up Mr. James Romney, showing, methought, uncommon courage to differ openly from his new and coveted associates. "I daresay he could never have made the money, but show me the man who would spend it better, or as well."

Messrs. Graves, Gifford, and Davenant's looks called the speaker an impertinent young jackanapes, for presuming to question their opinion; but Charlotte supported him.

"Quite right, Mr. Romney, to stand up for your friend. Graves, what a book of nonsense you are, when once you get talking! And what's greater than a *parvenu*, pray? Wasn't Shakespeare a *parvenu*? Wasn't Cæsar? And don't you wish you may be another, Beattie Graves?"

The walk home lasted some time. Mr. Gifford had taken us by another and a discursive way. Nobody was in a hurry except Annie, who pretended to be scared by the glow-worms on the grass, as by the phosphorescent sea yesterday, and screamed at the dark shadows of the trees we passed under, one of which had served as model for Herne's Oak in the play-scene. She must be pacified, then the gentlemen played pranks to frighten her again. No need to relate how many quips and cranks were crowded into that half-hour; how we joined hands round the oak, danced, sang snatches of the fairies' chorus; how the riot was suddenly stilled by the sound of the measured tramp of a night constable on his beat in the lane hard by; or how, as the watch drew near, Falstaff's head suddenly popped over the fence; and how, before the strange sights and strange noises abroad in the park that night, the State official prudently retired for reinforcements.

The summer dawn was glimmering when Mr. Romney shook hands with us at the park gates, and bade us a good night, which, for no special reason that I could assign, I felt glad was not a good-bye.

(To be continued.)

HUMAN LOVELINESS.

EXPANDING 'neath the sunny power
Of doting love, thy being grew
Into an almost perfect flower
Of rarest hue.

The mind composed of finer mould,
When sunn'd by pure affection's ray,
Will greater loveliness unfold
With each new day.

But with the mean, ignoble mind,
The paltry heart, such tenderness,
Such constancy and love combined,
Curse and not bless.

Thus the same sun whose vernal smile
Clothes lilies in their white array,
Arouses in the fest'ring pile
Swifter decay.

Thus June's Atlantic-tempered air
Adds richer fragrance to the rose ;
While the rank weed, with fost'ring care,
More frightful grows.

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF ST. STEPHEN."

A TRIP OUT OF SEASON.

CHAPTER I.

I AM travelling through the Outer Hebrides in mid-winter, seated with two companions in a rapidly-driven gig, and speeding through the desolate interior of one of these islands in the month of December! Why am I here now, of all seasons in the year? and what has induced me thus to forego the comforts of Christmastide in London?

"The Professor" is to blame. Such is the familiar title of the individual seated beside the driver, with his back to me—he of the burly frame and loud voice—the man whom cold does not seem to chill nor rain to moisten. He began it. I had known him in London, where he belongs to a club of men whose talk is of pibrochs and Celtic lore. It was he who lured me the other day from an Inverness hotel, where I had been called on business from the South, and persuaded me to start with him on a wild-goose expedition—in chase of some of his antiquarian follies—to this inhospitable region in the depth of winter. It is one of those grey sunless days before a fall of snow. I shiver within the folds of my travelling rugs. The effect of our hasty luncheon an hour ago has quite died within me. I hint this to the professor. He hands me, in reply, the mighty flask which he habitually carries. "Try the 'Glen Vagrant,'" he says encouragingly. I imbibe cautiously, for the draught is liquid fire, and feel better directly. The dreary watery landscape brightens; a tearing wind forbids conversation just at the moment, but as we turn a corner of the road and skirt a low range of sloppy hills I venture, in this interval of shelter, some remarks to my companion.

"It is a circumstance," I began, turning half round to the professor, who was in the act of drinking, "which I have always noted as remarkable, that your countrymen, the Scotch" (the professor was of Celtic origin, and had a mythical family residence somewhere in the Highlands), "in speaking of their national streams, such rivers as the Tay, the Tweed, the Don, and, yes, the Dee, always pronounce their names with a peculiar kind of hushed and instinctive reverence—" At this moment I was within an ace of performing an instinctive somersault, for our miserable steed shied violently at an imaginary roadside object. I clutch

the railing behind me convulsively. "Hold on!" cried the professor, "that was a near touch!" It was, though nearer for me in the hind seat of the crazy dog-cart than for him securely aproned in front.

Having recovered myself, I pursue the topic. "As I was remarking, your countrymen seem to dwell upon the very names of their rivers with a degree of fondness to which Englishmen are comparative strangers. It is rare to find the latter waxing enthusiastic in regard to the Thames, the Severn, or the Tyne." The professor nodded assent. "But I have observed," I continued, "that they have an equal tenderness—your countrymen, that is—in speaking of those lesser streams, let us say rills, or founts rather, which are also common to Scotland, the sources of such excellent beverages as that contained in your flask—in a word, the national distilleries." (Here my friend again tendered his pocket companion. I nodded a declinature.) "The 'Glen Vagrant,' for example—beautiful name! The 'Talisker,' fancy titles too, 'the Dew' of your native Bens—the very sound is sympathetic and touching. Perhaps," I added, "the frequent occurrence in Scotland of sacred wells, held in repute during centuries for their virtues, may explain the reverence with which these other not less worthy sources are customarily regarded and mentioned."

Here we turned another corner, and, the wind swooping down upon us once more, I relapse into silence.

What an extraordinary country—on every side, as far as the eye can reach, nothing but lakes! There is not a tree nor spot of cultivated land in sight, only low hills and heathery moorland, the latter cut up in every direction with water. In places the road is only a kind of bridge between lakes on either hand. Subtract the hills and the scenery consists of nothing but water dappled and interspersed with spots and strips of land.

We are driving due west, I believe, towards the Atlantic shore, and already a hoarse wave-murmur comes borne upon the wind. The name of our last stopping-place I did not catch: I never *can* catch these Gaelic names; even if I did so, would I be any the wiser? The name of every place here seems, to a stranger, as if spoken in a violent passion—Gaelic, the language of expletive and imprecation! I lapse into musing, although conscious every moment of becoming colder. Distrust the "Glen Vagrant" as a heat-producer! Cold is not favourable to meditation; yet hermits must frequently have been chilly—perhaps in that case they ceased meditating. I wonder if the next inn will be more comfortable than the last—better fires? Not likely. I shall go to bed on arrival! although this may not be a successful expedient, as I found when trying it at our last stage, for the professor and other kindred spirits "made a night"—and morning—"of it" with Gaelic harmony in the room immediately below, and sleep was impossible.

Where we are going to I really do not know. The professor *did* show me a map of our route before starting, but I had some vague idea that there would be coaches on the roads, and steamers to convey us through the endless channels and straits between the scraps of islands which make up the outer western chain. I know better now, prophetically. It will be, this trip of ours, one long series of journeyings on foot and in gigs on the land, and in open boats by sea, all the way, and in all weathers. Our ultimate destination, and "very sea-mark of our ultimate sail," is—I forget the name, but it is about the farthest westerly land before North America.

Only a theory could tempt any man so far into the wilderness at this season. The theory is of course my companion's, not mine. Result of the trip there will be none for me, except six weeks' catarrh. The professor has heard that some excavations of antiquarian interest have recently been made in the outer islands, and it is in the light of these excavations—or in their *darkness* rather—(that is the last flicker of the "Glen Vagrant!") that he seeks to trace the connection between—I really forget what—something about the Picts; but at all events it is a theory which he has always held single-handed, the whole archæological world being banded together in the opposite persuasion. And he cannot wait for better weather to commence his explorations.

Here is our first stopping-place. The professor, immediately on alighting, plunges into what seems to be an extremely passionate argument with the bystanders in general, and with the landlord of a very diminutive hostelry in particular. I also descend, stiffly. I shall begin to take notes of our wanderings; should I perish on the journey my notebook may have a melancholy interest, more particularly if submitted to the professor's society along with the result of his labours.

CHAPTER II.

"O! thrice forsaken, thrice deserted land
Of bogs and swamps, of fog and mist and rain;
Where ducks contest with men the doubtful strand,
And ———"

HEBRIDEAN MS.

SOME days have elapsed, and we are still staying at the inn. The daylight is so short that we have to make the most of our time and do our daily work of exploring caves and inspecting ruins before the sun sets. It is a relief to find that my companion does not favour the idea of committing elaborate suicide by travelling these swampy solitudes after dark by the light of a lantern.

When the day's work is done—for I am his assistant, sapper, and also miner upon occasion—the place seems "always afternoon" and evening, the latter intolerably long. I brought no

books with me, and no newspapers are to be had. This is one of the most depressing places imaginable, close to a dismal tidal shore. To-day we examined, or rather the professor did, a long, loop-holed, and consequently draughty, ruin, situated on a promontory of the coast. It is called by a name which Pitman himself would despair of reproducing phonetically. This building may have been originally a monastery or a church. Nobody knows—that is, certainly. I inwardly believe that it was neither the one nor the other. Were I asked for my opinion, which I am not, being only asked to hold the end of a tape with which my companion takes endless measurements, I would say that the building in question, from its situation and design, had originally been sympathetically erected by persons of unsound mind for the reception of others similarly afflicted.

It was on the day following that the first slight coolness arose between the professor and myself. We were still using as our head-quarters the inn by the shore. A tamer coast I never beheld, and yet this is the Atlantic seaboard in winter! Presumably we are only in a nook of it. The waves don't come in and dash themselves in foam on the rocks. Nothing of the kind. The whole of the tidal arrangements here, even in heavy weather, seem to me to consist in a continual slipping and shoaling over tangle-covered rocks and sand, and through dismal channels running like canals far into the land. Everything here is mixed, land and water slide imperceptibly the one into the other. There is a feeling of tidal insecurity and of boggy instability at every step. A belated steamer periodically enters the long tidal estuaries from the eastward, and, wandering through the windings of the hills, comes to its moorings in the centre of a heathery plain, many miles inland and close to the western shore; its deserted funnel upreared from the moss as if the vessel had been left there by some great modern deluge. In all my distressful wanderings by these oozy shores I had never seen any distance to seaward, for the simple reason that we were almost on the sea level, and there were no eminences within easy distance from which a view could be obtained. The island is, in parts, below the sea level, and the tide is only prevented from making a clean breach by the sandy dunes on the shore, within which, for mile upon mile, there is nothing but muddy loch and watery plain. Hills rise, however, far to the N.E., some bolder heights to the S., and one redeeming feature in the latter direction is visible if the weather be clear—the white serrated ridge of the Coolin Hills in Skye, with the misty, sleet-bosomed cloud lowering above the snow.

Having been told by the professor that we were to start for the next island at once, but that a hand-bag would be sufficient to carry as we would return the following day, I brought with me, in addition, a plaid to serve as a wrapper in the boat.

"Never mind the plaid," said my companion; "you will have enough to carry without that."

"How far is it to the boat?" I replied.

"There is no boat."

"Then you are not going to the next island?" I inquired.

"Certainly."

"Without a boat?"

"Yes."

"Excuse me, my dear professor," I said calmly; "did you not say we were going to the next *island*? Now an island is a——"

"Yes, yes," he interrupted petulantly; "but we are going to it on foot."

I had some suspicion that my companion had been indulging in "Glen Vagrant" before luncheon, but I did not pursue the argument, and we left the inn together.

"Can't get a gig, and no horses I could trust to," briefly explained he as we went on. *Can't trust horses.* Good heavens! where are we going? Only down by some innocent-looking sandhills apparently. Well, if I see anything dangerous in our route, I thought, it is easy to turn back—yes, back!

At the end of another half-hour's walk we were overtaken by a man, apparently sent after us from the inn. With him the professor held a short but animated Gaelic conversation. From his manner the messenger seemed to be against our proceeding farther. As usual, the professor overcame him by sheer force of lungs, and the man returned as he came. No sooner had he left us than I regretted I had not accompanied him. Something warned me that we were in danger, but the mist had so thickened upon us that it was impossible for a stranger to know the true state of matters.

"My dear fellow," said my companion to me after we had gone some distance farther, and suddenly struck from the sandhills across some hard-looking ribbed sand, "even if I did tell you about our route, you wouldn't understand. Come on!" I came on accordingly, and we arrived almost immediately at the bank of a very swollen stream, a couple of yards in width, flowing through the sands. Up and down this stream we wandered, looking for some easier crossing-place, as the six-foot jump would land us on a crumbling ledge of sand.

"Better ford it at once," said the professor at last, suiting the action to the word and wading above the knees of his knickerbockers in the muddy water. I demurred. "Jump here and I will catch you," he said. He did so, but so imperfectly that my feet were wet at once. "Dry in an hour or so," said he, and we passed on.

Another long spell of heavy walking, and the truth dawned upon me at last. "Are we crossing a tidal ford?" I queried.

"Yes, that is the case."

"How far have we yet to travel?" I persisted.

"About three or four miles yet."

Even a worm will turn. I resolved to do so. "Then I shall go back," I said firmly; "I don't care for venturing farther." That was the only time I ever saw the professor alarmed. "I can go back quite well," I continued, "by the mark of our footprints, and, as my feet are already wet, I can easily wade the stream we have already crossed."

"Nonsense!" he said, looking back, "you don't know what you are talking about—you *can't* go back now." As he spoke he looked at his watch. "Make haste," he cried, "for heaven's sake. Don't stand still that way; there is another ford to cross."

We were standing at the time, I a little distance from him, irresolute. Just as he spoke an indescribable sound came borne upon the wind; the mist cloud to seaward wavered, broke, formed again, and then came down, down, upon the sands, as if it were the harbinger of what lay beyond. I joined him and we hurried on.

"Is the next ford larger than the last?" I managed to ask him as we went.

"Scarcely," he answered; "that is, if we can hit the right place for fording; but this confounded mist bothers us, and the neap-tides don't run out far. But we shall be all right presently. That fellow from the inn wanted to go with us, but I know the ford better than he does." Self-confident professor!

Long before we reached the second ford, half walking, half running, our way became more difficult. The sands yielded under our feet. Large pools blocked our course, and made us take wide circuits to avoid them. And at last, when the ford came in sight through the mist, we found it to be a raging torrent some thirty feet in breadth. It was no time for words. Up and down the crumbling edges of the stream we ran despairingly. What was that? A roaring boom, like the sound of a heavy gun, came on the rising wind. White sea-birds fled out and in through the dense curtain of the mist-cloud.

"Nothing for it but to try," said the professor grimly. "Come to my right side, the pull of the water will be a little off you, and hold by me tightly." His voice shook in spite of his efforts.

In we strode. The sand-bank from which we stepped at once slipped into the water behind us; the bed of the stream felt moving under our feet. To the knees we went at once; then deeper still, but not for some time. Once we retreated, the footing being so yielding; then once again we tried it, farther up. Mid-stream there was a whitened rush; we gradually neared it. "The deepest part," whispered my companion; "come on!" It was ghastly work. If only there had been

time, but every moment was precious! The centre took me over the waist at the first step; we swayed together in the hurrying flood; my feet lifted for an instant, but pressing on despairingly I found the sand firm once more. Then the shallower part at the other side of the rush was deeper than its fellow, because of the time we had taken. Here, once more, we were almost gone. The treacherous sand again gave way beneath us, but the shallower water gave us more courage. A step or two forward and we were through!

"Told you that," said the irrepressible professor, as, standing on the bank, we drained the muddy streams from our garments, "no one could have pulled you through so well as I have!"

"Thank you," I returned quietly. "Of one thing I am certain, you will not have an opportunity of again conferring the obligation. I consider we have had a very narrow escape with our lives."

In fact, I was exceedingly warm—in manner, that is—for physically I was chilled to the bone.

Through the remainder of the journey—through shallow pools and miry sand—we trudged painfully until we reached the inn on the farther shore. I went to bed immediately to avoid risk from the exposure. Not to sleep, however, and the walls being thin I overheard my audacious fellow-traveller detailing to the natives in the parlour the skilful way in which he had piloted our way through the fords! I afterwards learned that we had started against all counsel to the contrary, being far too late for one thing and the tides unfavourable for another.

As I sternly refused to return on foot the following day, we accomplished the journey in a dog-cart. Being in ample time there was no repetition of the risks we had formerly encountered, a circumstance, which the professor, ingeniously enough, attributed to a change in the wind!

CHAPTER III.

"And spend a week in Heisger."

Chorus of Gaelic Song.

AFTER our return journey over the ford I told the professor of my intention to travel south without delay. He pled with me, however, so earnestly to remain with him that I gave way. He is not an unsociable fellow after all, the professor, although he has his foibles. He further prevailed upon me to accompany him to what was to be positively the last stopping-place of his visit, an outlying land to the westward; the journey in this case to be accomplished by boat. I at last consented, on condition that the trip should only be undertaken in favourable

weather, and that I should see the boat and crew before they were chartered.

While the crew were coming forward to sign articles at the inn, I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance, for the first time, of a bard, or Highland poet, gifted with the art of composing Gaelic poetry off-hand. Had I not been told that he was a bard, I do not think I should have known it. To all appearance he was the most prosaic of mortals. Inspiration did not come upon him at all times, nor was it apparently quite within his own bidding. In order to sing at all, it appeared that he must, in the first place, be copiously entertained at the sole expense of the audience for the time being—a task which the professor essayed in quite a wholesale and cold-blooded manner in the inn parlour. One of the lesser geysers of Iceland is customarily provoked to an eruption by a process of pouring earth and stones into its interior. The preparatory process, in the case of the bard, was of a similar nature, the provocative in his case, however, being wholly liquid. It was rather a tedious operation, the poetry must have been in the very depths of his being, for it was only after the eighth tankard that I saw it (by his eye) coming to the surface. The tenth potation effected it. He rose slowly to his feet, gazed wildly round, suddenly sat down again, and then, fixing me with his glittering eye, poured forth such a dissonant flood of Gaelic that the sound rang in my ears for days. The professor, when it was all over, said it was very fine. The burden of it consisted, it seems, in a prophetic description of our sea voyage to Heisger on the following day—our bark, upon that occasion, being represented as sailing before the gentle zephyrs of a summer sea. From which I gather that the bard's poetical faculty was more fully developed than the prophetic.

The same evening four men signed articles for the voyage, on the strength of liquid provocatives. Our boat was to be on the shore, or more literally in the mud, below the inn, at seven of the following morning. All the men were thorough seamen, it was said, and, professedly, had sailed in foreign waters. The bard was not of the number; it was delicately hinted that "he would be resting next day" after his supreme effort. I caught a glimpse of him, however, in the morning, just as we quitted the inn. The poetic fire was still in him, although to all appearance he had spent the night out of doors. He was leaning against the wall of an adjoining piggery, in a swaying but meditative attitude. Our departure roused him from his trance; he tried to wave us a farewell, but the effort was too much for his strength, and we left him in a recumbent position with his heels in the air.

Although the weather was fairly good, we made an indifferent start. One of the crew not turning up in time we were "late for the tide," that haunting curse of Hebridean travel. All we could do was to catch the last wave of the retreating ebb "to

bear us away on its bosom to the ocean," as the professor poetically put it.

This was accomplished by dint of the passengers, the professor and I, embarking in the boat, which lay in a kind of muddy channel, and being therein propelled to seaward by the crew, who walked behind submerged to their waists in the watery ooze. After about a mile of this progress we fortunately encountered a stream or "race" flowing west; the crew then jumped aboard, and our boat rapidly skirting the outlying sand dunes we found ourselves at sea. Literally we caught the tide by running after it, as one might chase and overtake a very slow train.

The bard was wrong in his forecast—perhaps he had not been sufficiently stimulated—for the sea outside was of a very rough and choppy description. The boat was small, uncomfortable, and odorous of the harvest of the sea, with a frail rig in the shape of a "shoulder of mutton" sail and a "jib," appropriately enough called a "flying" one, inasmuch as it frequently fluttered to pieces, and had to be taken down and patched together during the voyage.

To the westward lay the broad stretch of the Atlantic, broken only, some ten miles away, by one low reef-like island with a lighthouse tower at one end. For this remote spot we were bound. The passage is intricate and hazardous, the soundings shallow, and the way abounding in reefs and shoals.

As the breeze freshened and the motion of the boat increased, I "went below," in a figurative sense, that is to say, lay prone among the ballast of the boat, feeling exceedingly poorly. When I recovered, we were running under the lee of the sandy hummocks of Heisger, with the exception of St. Kilda, which looms to the N.W., the outermost of the Outer Hebrides.

During this midwinter trip I have suffered much discomfort. The one bright recollection of the weary weeks is my brief stay in this sandy islet, a mere strip of desolate hummocks, some two miles in length by half a mile in breadth, with a dozen or more of crofter cottages disposed in a ring among the grassy hollows of the interior, and fronting the mighty surge of the western ocean. Rudely-cultivated patches of ground, manured with the abundant seaweed, here grow excellent crops. After the waterflood has fallen for days one may walk the downs dry-shod; the soil is pure sand, and the coast edged with sandy hillocks, the highest some fifty feet. The inhabitants are simple but kindly, and welcomed us on landing with unaffected grace. There is no bard in Heisger, and no opening for one. In one of the snug cottages, and by its kindly peat-blaze, I found comfort for the first time in the Hebrides, and was not sorry to hear, when we dismissed our crew, that our stay was to last at least four days, the boatmen to return for us on seeing a signal-fire lighted on the sandhills the preceding night.

The professor plunged at once into his antiquarian researches; the last link of his theory was to be riveted here. For my own part I preferred, when the weather allowed, to ramble along the shores of this first barrier of the western wave—exploring the drift-heaps full of honeycombed spars and odd remnants of wreckage, and strings of strange seaweed, drifted here by the Gulf Stream, and holding in its meshes the molucca bean and other waifs and strays from warmer climes. Here the evenings, after the sun had gone down—gold, amethyst, and opal upon the ocean floor—were not tedious.

Some of the younger people—there is a tiny Board school, but no church within the bounds—spoke English fairly, and our host's daughter—for the truth will out, and the professor may circulate his own side of the story—was a very pretty girl. Of course he had the supreme delight of conversing with her in her native tongue, but I flatter myself that she understood his companion quite as well.

On the third evening of our stay the beacon was to be lighted to warn our boatmen to come back for us on the following day. Mairi and I undertook the task. We had been collecting drift-wood for the purpose all the afternoon, and while the lamps were being lighted in the tiny circle of the cottages, we stole out, and, having dodged the professor, went together to the highest of the inland sandhills, where the pile was laid. There is a wealth of legend about the signal-fires of these islands—one of a Heisger lover, who lighted a fire just like this one, to tell his sweetheart on the farther shore of his coming next day, and how the boat in which he voyaged being lost, the signal-fire blazed every year on the fatal night, being kindled by spirit hands.

The wind was from the west—a sobbing gust shook all the withered seaweed fronds of our beacon fire, and blew the sparks to ruddy flame. I told Mairi, as the light fell on her rounded form and lit her glancing yellow hair, that she was like the fairy sea-sweetheart of Dunvegan's Chief—the old Skye story—and as she blushed and pouted I suddenly remembered that it was, of all nights in the year, Christmas Eve, and was fain, on the strength of that recollection, to employ a bunch of trembling seaweed in lieu of mistletoe!

Perhaps we had forgotten our task, and not sufficiently fed the blaze, for certain it is that on the following day our boatmen did not come for us. The professor, highly indignant, strolled to the lighthouse end of the island, to see, he said, if the smoke we had seen in that direction in the morning was that of one of the lighthouse tenders. Unsuspectingly I allowed him to go alone, and strolled by the shores in his absence. When I returned to the cottage the household anxiously inquired if I had seen my friend. He had sent a messenger for his bag. We found the truth at last; he had deserted me! Already the steamer's hull

was low on the south horizon. Seeing his opportunity he had taken a passage in her to Oban and had basely fled. Ungrateful professor!

The shock of this intelligence over, I did not much regret his departure. Even if the expected boat did not come from the other shore (it never did), a passage could easily be found for me on the lighthouse packet, plying fortnightly.

So I spent my Christmas week in Heisger, nothing loth. The days were calm and mild, and I tired not of wandering by the shores of the solitary and sailless ocean by day, or of listening to its unquiet murmur through the night. When the day came for my departure I was sorry to go, and thought of my strange, happy Christmas all the way homeward. But I had seen Heisger and was content. He who has not visited this islet of yellow sand and grassy sward has not seen the Hebrides.

Just as I was stepping on board the boat an islander brought me a large portfolio which he had found in one of the rocky caves lately haunted by the professor. Luckless man! it contained a large quantity of notes and drawings, doubtless connected with his great discovery, perhaps the basis of his forthcoming paper. He must have left it in his hurry! Under the circumstances he could scarcely write asking me to search for it, even if a letter could reach here in less than three weeks. I put up the portfolio very carefully, addressed it to him at his London club "with my compliments on quitting Heisger," and posted the parcel at the first available post office on my homeward journey. Strange to say, I did not, on my return to the metropolis, receive any acknowledgment of the service thus rendered. Stranger still, the last time I passed the professor in Piccadilly he carefully looked in another direction!

A GREAT SEED ESTABLISHMENT.

AN illustration of what great results from little causes spring may truly be witnessed in the large handsome premises of Messrs. Sutton, seed merchants, of Reading. Theirs is a very peculiar trade, indeed unique in its way, for the seed trade as now known was really formed by Messrs. Sutton, of Reading, and all other seed businesses throughout the world are but imitations of this great establishment. Like all such matters it grew up from small beginnings, but its growth was rapid. Half a century ago the father and grandfather of the present partners were engaged in a corn-dealing and milling trade. The seed business was founded by Mr. Martin Hope Sutton, the present senior partner. Among the causes that have contributed so rapidly to raise a small trade to the present commercial prosperity, none has been more powerful than the crusade waged by Messrs. Sutton against the abominable and too prevalent practice of seed adulteration. It is a matter of notoriety that it was a common custom (which indeed in some quarters still obtains) to reduce the germinating quality of seeds by the introduction of dead or useless grains in a fixed proportion. The certainty that has been acquired that the firm of Sutton not only send out unadulterated seeds, but seeds of proved growth, has given them that world-wide fame which causes men in all parts of the earth to say, "If you want good seeds, go to Sutton, of Reading." Ably piloted by a member of the firm, I recently enjoyed the privilege of visiting the huge fabric, and must thank the gentleman for the patient courtesy with which he showed me over the large place, explaining every detail. Many hours could indeed be passed here most agreeably and instructively. It is surprising how much there is that is new and interesting in connection with a seed.

The busy time of the firm is from January to April, and the rest of the year is chiefly spent in preparing for those months. In the autumn, however, there is a brisk demand for bulbs. Now this is one of the peculiarities of this trade, that orders do not come in at the rate of so many a day, but in a series of great throbs, everybody seeming to want their seeds at the same moment, so that often the rush is literally overwhelming and tasks to the utmost the resources and ingenuities of the establishment. The greater quantity of Sutton's seeds and bulbs are grown on their own farms, of which they have many, in England, Germany, Holland, and

the Channel Islands ; but even with the knowledge that the seeds are grown from good stock, the partners do not rest satisfied. Of the purity and value of a seed little idea can be formed, even by the closest examination of the sample. Hence it is necessary to subject it to trial, and no part of the establishment is more attractive or gives a greater idea of Messrs. Sutton's care than the Seed Trial House. Here a sample from every parcel of seed received on the premises is carefully tested, 50 or 100 seeds being taken indiscriminately out of the bag and sown. A careful record is kept of the percentage of growth, and not a seed allowed to go out of the house till the firm is satisfied that it will produce a good result in the hands of their customers. Some of these seeds are sown in soil, others on bricks placed in a water-filled tank. All are subjected to heat that they may sprout as quickly as possible. If a customer is, however, in a great hurry, a special arrangement is adopted. In a box heated with petroleum are placed layers of damp felt, and on this again are laid sheets of white blotting paper. Between these are strewn the seeds, and within twenty-four, or at most thirty-six, hours they come out enough to test their vitality. If they show themselves good under these abnormal conditions, Messrs. Sutton rest satisfied that they will be still better when placed in soil. It would appear that at first they could not get all seeds to submit to this artificial process of growth. For example, lettuce was obdurate ; they could not induce it to sprout, until at last they discovered that by damping the seed itself before placing it on the damp felt even its obduracy could be overcome. Of all these experiments an elaborate register is kept. Hence, if customers should complain of the article delivered, the firm can refer to what the same seeds have done at their hands, and so find out what fault has been committed by the grower that he has not attained the same results. Often of course natural causes are to blame, like drought ; often also the ignorance of growers as to treatment and soil. To obviate this as far as may be possible, Messrs. Sutton have long made it a rule to advise gratuitously their several customers in the matter of grass seeds, as to which kinds are best suited to the particular land under cultivation. A special room is set apart for testing and examining the specimens of soil sent up for this purpose. The expediency of the plan is obvious when it is remembered that, to enumerate only the leading descriptions, surface soils include such varieties as clay, heavy, light and medium loams, chalky sheep downs, chalky uplands, water meadows, and drifting and blowing sands, the characteristics of each of which are largely modified by the geological formation below. Each of these lands requires different treatment, and the grass that would thrive on one soil will not even grow on another. To ignorance on these points are due more failures in farming than to wet seasons or agricultural depression. Wise farmers consult Messrs. Sutton. They even leave it in their hands to

decide what length of time pasturage shall occupy the ground, whether permanently or for a certain number of years, and by repeated and crucial tests, Messrs. Sutton have now proved that it is possible in two or three years to produce a fine and permanent pasturage, a fact hitherto doubted by a large majority of our English agriculturists, that most conservative among the races of mankind. Indeed, grass seed is one of Messrs. Sutton's strongest points; a special block of buildings is devoted to it, and very impressive are the huge rooms stocked full of thousands of bags of lawn mixtures and farm grass seeds. Here natural grass seeds, grown in the best districts of the Rhine and Moselle, Scotch rye grass from the fertile land of Midlothian, clover seeds from almost every county in England, give some idea of the magnitude of the quantities required to meet the demands of customers. In this block, too, are the mixing floors, where are prepared the seed mixtures according to the particular soil and purpose for which they are wanted. When preparing grass seeds it seems it is always necessary to put the lightest at the bottom or they can never be well mixed. When sending out lawn mixtures the grass and clover have to be packed in separate parcels, as the clover being the heavier is apt to shake to the bottom during carriage by rail, and this class of customers usually sow straight out of the bag without thought, and when only half the crop comes up, complain and say the seed was bad. This is but one instance among many of how Messrs. Sutton have to be wide awake to all the possible stupidities that may be committed by their clients.

Thus another example. They have a special kind of flower of which the seed costs £1,000 an ounce, and three seeds from 2s. 6d. to 5s. Customers usually take three seeds, which are supplied to them by letter; these they tear open so carelessly that the seeds roll out, and then they write to complain that they have never been received. The firm now gum them securely into the paper.

Of grass seed mixtures there are no less than fifty-four different kinds, all of which are prepared separately. The prescription for each is recorded in a book, together with the prescriptions of those made for special purposes, such as sowing down the grounds of the International Exhibitions of Paris, Vienna, Philadelphia, and Melbourne, the racecourse at Gibraltar, the cricket ground at Malta, or some of the extensive sheep-runs of New Zealand. It is curious to learn that red clover and cow-grass seed are so much alike that even the most experienced eye cannot tell them apart. Hence, the former is kept in a locked room to prevent mistakes occurring, and entrance is only accorded by special order. This makes the assistants careful and practically renders errors impossible.

What adds a charm to a visit to Messrs. Sutton's is, besides the cleanliness of the stock-in-trade, the almost total absence of noisy or odoriferous machinery. With the exception of lifts, there is

only one set of machines employed in the place, and these are neither large, noisy nor fiendish of aspect. They are used for cleaning the seeds, and are known by the men respectively as "Coercion" and "Persuasion." The latter gently fans the seeds placed in it through seven different layers, till at last the best and heaviest fall to the bottom; the middle qualities having meanwhile stayed half-way, and the dust flown out of the window. "Coercion" is employed upon wheat and larger seeds, the qualities being separated from each other by quick, sharp taps, not quite uniform in character, while the rubbish falls through sieves placed beneath. The first quality is then sold as A, the second as B. Formerly the third quality was carted away from the place as rubbish and shunted over the nearest railway embankment. My guide told me, however, that competition was so great now in the seed department that this third quality is sent to London, where it is sold at Mark Lane for a low price, not, however, of course, under the name or ægis of Messrs. Sutton. "People wonder then," he went on to say, "that the crop raised thence is worthless, if indeed there is a crop at all. They have just bought cheap, have crowded over those customers who buy of us and pay what seem high prices, and have never calculated the consequence." Some grass seeds are of too light a character to be cleaned thus, and have to be hand-sifted. Hand-sifted, too, are peas and beans, as it is with them not so much a question of weight as of appearance, whether they be good or no. A long room is devoted to the sorting of these, where women sit in rows before counters spread with the round fruits. Those that are good are sent rolling through a hole in the counter, under which is placed a sack, those that are indifferent or bad thrown aside. These women are paid by an ingenious system that makes it to their profit to pick out only the best, and to reject any that have the least blemish or flaw.

Flower seeds and bulbs have also their separate departments. These are obtained from plants grown, ripened, and harvested on Messrs. Sutton's own grounds, and include all varieties, from the modest mignonette at sixpence an ounce, to the highly bred and developed begonia at £200 an ounce. During the various periods of growth, plants that have been put out for seed are carefully inspected at intervals by one of the firm, and every "rogue," or untrue plant is taken out. Thousands of acres are thus inspected during the year. Bulbs require much care, as they are apt to sprout or become mildewed. In the bulb room an equable temperature and perfect ventilation are needful. It is further divided into compartments with sliding wooden doors. Besides this every separate lot of bulbs is kept in a large basket of light wicker-work, which admits air all round, and in the centre, passing through the mass of bulbs, is a tube of iron-wire netting, which again brings air into the very centre of the mass. The result of this care and

treatment is to favour a dry dormant condition ; the bulk of every parcel is such that exhaustive evaporation is prevented, while on the other hand, the bulbs are kept so cool and airy that they are most reluctant to grow, and hence, when planted or potted, they have all their initial vigour well preserved.

But after grasses, vegetables are perhaps Messrs. Sutton's strongest point. We have all of us at agricultural shows seen the cases they exhibit with mammoth cabbages, peas, beans, potatoes, and what not else, all professedly grown from their own seeds, and have often, I daresay, felt a little doubtful as to the absolute fidelity of these representations. It was a reproof to such incredulity to be taken into the modelling rooms where these features are prepared for exhibition, and to see the workmen modelling cabbages leaf by leaf from the original, casting potatoes, carefully reproducing turnips and swedes. Indeed it is quite a large department, this modelling one. Of their vegetable seeds the firm are very properly proud, for to bring them to their present perfection has needed years of research and observation. In the first instance stock seed is obtained. This is acquired somewhat in the following fashion. Take wheat for example. It is well known that the grains in an ear that sit at the top and bottom are less strong than those in the middle. Hence, Messrs. Sutton would only take for stock seed the middle grains. From these they would raise a crop, again taking only the middle grains for stock, and so on for several years, until a most superior strong stock seed is obtained. One room is wholly devoted to beet stock obtained in this wise. This my guide told me was the most valuable stock upon the premises, having a pedigree twenty years old. It is one of the most difficult to obtain, for a splendid crop of beet may be growing, and the whole spoilt by a swarm of bees flying over a neighbouring field of mangel and producing cross fertilization. In this way the labour of years can be rendered nil, and the whole process of raising a strong stock must be gone through again. It seems strange at the first blush that seeds should require it, but one room is set apart for the records of the pedigrees of all seeds that have ever passed through the premises. Whenever it is possible Messrs. Sutton also like to be kept acquainted with the subsequent history of their seeds. Thus, when some of them go out to farmers whom they know and can trust, they often ask permission to visit the crop, and select fine specimens for seeding again. For example with swedes, they know a man who grows them well, and they arrange with him annually that they should select from his field, say 400 specimens, perfect for size, rootlessness, colour, and shape. These they plant again, submitting them to yet a second or even a third process of selection, until at last those wondrous samples are obtained that we see in their show cases. The whole matter after all is only the Darwinian process of natural selection, and the survival of the fittest artificially

brought about. Potatoes are another of the strong points of the firm, and the varieties sent out by them are known for their disease-resisting powers. These are also sorted by hand in a room with a good strong upper light, that would bring into relief any imperfection. Of course all manner of dangers have to be guarded against. Thus mushroom spawn has to be inclosed in a dark room, and requires much care or it will run into white filaments. Turnip seeds are apt to develop a mite like to that in cheese. They have therefore to be kept in a room, at a temperature not likely to germinate the little nuisances; but even so they will often spring into life. Hence, every now and then a sack of turnip seed is blown out by passing it through "Persuasion," else the mite would eat into the seeds and kill their power of vitality.

An entire building is devoted to the export trade, and the drying and packing connected with this. It is by their original process of packing that Messrs. Sutton have got the chief colonial trade in their hands, for by this means the seeds do not suffer from the changes of climate to which they are subjected. The actual method of packing is a trade secret. The receptacles in which they are packed vary from tin boxes air-tight, and specially made for the purpose, and which are finally soldered down, to iron tanks and enormous zinc-lined wooden cases. There are special drying rooms for seeds that have to go through the Suez Canal. The purpose is to dry out the damp that is naturally round a seed. If this were not done when going into hot countries the damp would evaporate, settle on the tins and cause the contents to germinate or "malt." This drying must, however, be done with extreme care, so as to dry and yet not to kill by withdrawing the moisture needful to maintain vitality. Even for the smallest order from abroad stoves are set alight, the firm does not wait until they have a considerable quantity ready. Large consignments are dried in sacks laid upon a perforated iron floor, smaller in iron baskets put on stands. Of course, this drying somewhat reduces the weight of each parcel at the rate of 6 lb. a hundredweight. It is therefore an understood thing with colonial customers that they pay twenty-one and a half hundredweight for a ton of goods, one and a half hundredweight being lost by evaporation.

By no means inconsiderable are the ledger, despatch, railway, and post offices of the firm, their business of this kind being the more extensive that Messrs. Sutton have no agents, but require all orders to be sent to them direct. In this way they can insure that only genuine goods go out under their name. I was shown a packet of one day's orders, a goodly pile truly, and this did not include letters, correspondence, invoices, &c. Of the former about 1,800 are received daily, and some 700 parcels of seeds despatched. By a careful system of dissected book-keeping, Messrs. Sutton can at a moment's notice find out how much profit they have made upon any kind of seed. Altogether the arrangements in each

department of this huge concern are most admirable in their way. That Messrs. Sutton have rendered real service to horticulture and agriculture it does not need their goodly display of prize medals from every State in the world to testify.

A PHOTOGRAPH.

TALL art thou, with every grace,
Maiden of the winsome face ;
Eyes of tenderest hazel hue,
Liquid eyes that pierce one through ;
On thy cheeks, where blooms alway
Red of rose and white of May,
Lies the love-god, and between
" Sweetest mouth was ever seen."
And a sunbeam lingers there,
Tangled in thy wavy hair.

Sixteen Summers now have shed
All their bounty on thy head ;
Sixteen Winters passed away,
Leave thee fairer than the day.
Decked by Spring with sweetest flowers,
Child of Autumn's fairest hours.
Thou hast gained from seasons four,
More than e'er was given before.
Thou hast gained all they impart,
And hast gained, ah me ! my heart.

UNDER ORDERS.

IN a shabby ground-floor room, which contrived to do duty as study, dining-room, nursery and general sitting-room of a Vicarage in the East End of London, sat, one afternoon in late autumn, a mother and son. That most pathetic form of poverty—the kind which is linked in indissoluble union with gentility—had stamped this nondescript apartment for its own. The wall paper had seen better days, and had lighted on exceptionally dingy ones; the ceiling was blackened with gas; the carpet had lost all trace of its original pattern; the drugget was copiously darned in places, where a threadbare condition recorded the track of footsteps; the horsehair seats of the mahogany chairs were deplorably worn at the edges, and the position of a railway rug in the very centre of a forbidding-looking sofa suggested the idea that rents or stains probably lurked beneath its friendly shade.

Little folks had left marks of their presence scattered here and there in the room. On the sideboard was a pile of copy-books, dog's-eared primers, and story books, flanked by an atlas; from behind a sofa bolster peeped a scantily-attired doll, with solemn, staring blue eyes, hectic cheeks, and a battered head, whereon bald patches alternated with flaxen ringlets.

The house stood in a plot of unproductive land—by courtesy called a garden—which apparently furnished a recreation ground for a number of hens, who at the present moment derived a strange enjoyment from occupying holes, which they had scratched for themselves, in the earth beneath some decrepit shrubs. Beyond the garden stretched the streets and lanes of White-chapel. Ceaseless street cries mingled with the rattle of wheels, the banging of omnibus doors, and the jingle of tram-car bells. "Third Edition—'Echo,' shouted, in shrill treble, a sharp-looking youngster, with a bundle of papers under his arm; "Six for sixpence—Cau-li-flowers," roared the deep bass of a costermonger; a dustman, a knife-grinder, a shoeblack, a cat's-meat man, a fish-stall keeper, and other members of the itinerant fraternity blended their voices in maddening chorus.

Within the Vicarage, mother and son, heedless of the distracting sounds, were engaged in earnest conversation. The mother, a middle-aged lady, with a careworn, refined face, diligently darned a small sock, which stood greatly in need of her services;

the son, a young man of about three and twenty, with a slim lithe figure and a boyish, handsome, sensitive face, mechanically watched her flying needle as he listened or replied.

Mrs. Murray was wife of the vicar of St. Stephen's, Whitechapel, an elderly, scholarly, unsuccessful clergyman, whose means were wholly inadequate to meet all the claims made on him by a numerous family. The son—David by name—had early developed intellectual tastes; his expenses at school and college had been defrayed by a wealthy eccentric kinsman of his mother. The youth turned out shy, studious, and dreamy, the possessor of an enthusiasm for poetry, but of little practical ability, and of no instinctive knowledge of the world. When, with the attainment of the "Newdigate" and a good degree, his college career came to an end, and the time arrived when aid in the adoption of a calling would have been highly acceptable, the relation's assistance was capriciously withdrawn. David Murray returned home; and doubt reigned under the paternal roof with regard to his prospects in life. His father shook his head dubiously when the young man bashfully professed himself a wooer of the muse, and expressed a desire to follow the vocation of a poet. "Poetry doesn't pay, even when the writer is a genius, and—you are not a genius, you know, David," said the clergyman, with sorrowful candour.

Mrs. Murray belonged to a wealthy family who had taken umbrage at her marriage with a poor parson. Her brothers and sisters had consigned herto oblivion, and her name was omitted from her father's will. But a few days before my story opens, a sister, the widow of a fabulously rich East India merchant, named Wilton, held out the golden sceptre of reconciliation, and Mrs. Murray touched it with trembling rapture. "We are sisters," graciously wrote Mrs. Wilton, from Florence, where she was spending some months, "and it is time to forget our differences." From this exordium the widow passed to the narration of a family quarrel, which had indirect relation to the Murray interests. "I am greatly disappointed," she wrote, "in my nephew Tom—poor James' son—who, till lately, managed my estates in Devon and Somerset. He has given me grave cause for displeasure, and I have shut my doors upon him. This being the case, I am anxious to make the acquaintance of your eldest lad, who has received no benefits from me, and from whom, therefore, according to the way of the world"—anger invested the writer's pen with unwonted sarcasm—"I expect the more gratitude. You have not yet, I suppose, seen your way to putting your son into any profession. Well, Tom's empty place, as steward, may in time and after due preparation suit him—who knows? I am resolved to like the lad; I even build castles in the air for him, and have in my head a scheme for his marriage with my husband's ward, Joyce Balfour, who lives with me and is my heiress. Send your son to Florence, to pass the winter here, and to return with us in the spring to

Devonshire. Let him spend what time and see what places he likes *en route*. I inclose a cheque for his travelling expenses."

Consciousness of the pique (aroused by "nephew Tom") which obviously lay at the bottom of this letter, did not disturb the pleasure with which Mrs. Murray received her sister's overtures. She told herself, in her simple piety, that Providence had opened a way for the provision of her son; she called on David to rejoice with her.

But David refused to rejoice. On the afternoon when we find him in the Whitechapel parlour, his aunt's communication was under discussion, and his contribution to the conversation was flavoured with the spice of petulance. He was seated on a low chair, at his mother's feet, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hands, and his eyes fixed gloomily on the fire. One clause in the letter—that relating to a possible marriage between Joyce Balfour and himself—had aroused his ire. The young man's ideal of marriage was high and pure; to have it rudely broken in upon with mercenary suggestions, and with the threatened interposition of a third person to regulate his choice, was to the last degree distasteful to him.

"Who is this Joyce Balfour, mother?" asked David, tossing aside the momentous letter.

"I know little more of her than your aunt tells us, dear; she was Mr. Wilton's ward, is rather younger than you, I fancy, and I have heard that she has considerable property. When she inherits my sister's estates, in addition to her own, she will be enormously rich. Your aunt"—with a slight pause and a wistful look in David's direction—"was always fond of match-making. If her fancy for an engagement between you two young people should be realized, your fortune would be made, David."

"But I don't want my fortune to be made—after that fashion," cried the young man hotly. "What do I know, and what do I care, about Miss Balfour?"

"She will be enormously rich," urged the mother, falling feebly back on her first point. "I should be glad to know you were saved from a poor man's portion, David, for I have learned by experience how hard it is to struggle against poverty." The mother laid down her sock, and glanced appealingly towards the young man, who responded with a frown. David was young, and he had dreams of an affluent position, to be won, not by a mercenary marriage, but by literary achievements. But he could not brag of his spurs before he had won them; he grew silent.

"We have no right to assume, mother," he burst forth at length, his slumbering chivalry awakening to new life, "that Miss Balfour would accept the honour of an alliance with myself, even if I were inclined to offer it."

Mrs. Murray smiled. She took up her work again. "Miss Balfour is probably aware," she said, as she stooped to rethread

her needle, "of your aunt's plans, and she must know that it might be greatly against her interest to oppose them."

There was another silence.

"At least you will not decide in the matter till you have seen Miss Balfour, David?"

"No, I will not decide till I have seen her."

"And you will go to Florence?"

David rose, walked to the window and looked out. But he saw nothing; his thoughts were far away. "Florence" was a fascinating name to the untravelled lad; he wished that his errand there were not so unwelcome.

"Yes, I will go," he said slowly, "if I can reconcile myself to the thought that I am ousting my unknown cousin Tom from my aunt's favour."

"Nonsense." The flying needle halted in mid course. "You are not ousting him; he has already ousted himself. Don't be quixotic, dear."

David sighed. His last hope of escape seemed dissipated.

Just at this moment the sound of fleet footsteps was heard; the door flew open, and three or four children who had been passing—as marks of treacle on hands, faces, and pinafores testified—an agreeable half-hour in the kitchen, appeared on the scene. Their advent was the signal for David's departure to his own room.

A few days later the young man started on his travels. In the excitement inseparable from a first foreign tour, the object of his wanderings was almost forgotten. He went through the usual vicissitudes of a long journey. The usual important package was left behind, and its absence, as usual, discovered too late for recovery. The usual countings of hand-bags and wraps were performed, and then the re-countings, to make assurance doubly sure. The usual sprightliness on boarding, and dejectedness on leaving, the packet, were duly experienced. Then came hurried meals at railway stations, then views of monotonous French landscape, with its inevitable long straight rows of poplars, then glimpses of bolder scenery, of *châteaux*, and of snow peaks, and then Switzerland burst upon David's view. The young man had chosen the St. Gothard route; he had determined to avail himself of his aunt's generosity, and to linger over his journey; in a letter in which he announced his plans to her, he spoke of an intention to spend a couple of days at Lucerne, a few hours at Milan, and a week in Venice, the town which above all others appealed to his poetic fancy.

The lad revelled in his new experiences. His fellow tourists caught something of his enthusiasm; every day he made new friends, who parted from him at night with flattering reluctance. Not only did the wonderful sights which met his eye delight David; in his young freshness he thoroughly enjoyed the import-

ance of ordering beds and meals, or paying scores, at foreign inns. At last, Italy was reached; at last, Milan lay like a dream behind him, and one early morning found him sleeping fitfully in a railway carriage, and nearing Venice. At five o'clock he awoke, rubbed his eyes, opened the window and looked out. The edge of a hand-bag, which had very poorly played the part of a pillow during the short night had left proof of its insufficiency in the cramped condition of David's neck. The young man was sleepy and cold; circumstances were not favourable to his first impression of the approach to Venice. It was with some sense of dreariness that David found himself in a waste of water. Before him, behind him, and on either side, grey water stretched out, to meet a grey cold morning sky; no land was visible. He was on the bridge—nine miles long—which connects Venice with the mainland. In a short time the forms of towers and clustering houses began to reveal themselves against the horizon; the train whizzed on, and presently the city of the Adriatic lay, broad and clear, before David's eyes. The young man held his breath as he gazed. But a railway station is the last place for sentimentalism, and before the platform of the Venetian railway station the train came, in a few minutes, to a standstill. "Romance hasn't a chance against its arch-enemy, steam," thought David, as he jumped to the ground, mustered a few words of stumbling Italian, embellished with French, and with their aid placed himself under the protection of a porter, a red-haired, well-built fellow, with a face like an old Venetian picture. The Englishman's registered luggage was quickly collected and placed in a gondola; a herd of loafers—ragged, picturesque men and boys—swooped down upon him as fair prey: one seized his umbrella; another bore off his Murray and his macintosh; a third attempted—in spite of vigorous remonstrance—to relieve him of the light burden of a small paper volume of Howell's "Venetian Life," which he held in his hand. Before the station were a number of gondolas, their proprietors hailing passengers with deafening cries of "*Gondoli, signori. Signori, gondoli, gondoli.*"

"What hotel does the Signore command?" asked hat in hand David's gondolier, a weather-beaten old Venetian, with the manners of a duke.

"The 'Angleterre,'" returned David, with a series of nods; he guessed the meaning of the question. Mrs. Wilton had furnished him with a list of hotels worthy his patronage in the different towns in which he was to stay.

Soon David was gliding on, along the Grand Canal, under the bridge of the Rialto, past the fruit market, with its wealth of grapes and pumpkins, beside world-famed Gothic or Renaissance palaces. He was in Venice at last—in Venice the city of dreams, and the whole scene had come upon him so suddenly that he failed to grasp the reality of his surroundings.

All that day—after his luggage had been deposited, and a bedroom secured at the “Angleterre,” on the Riva degli Schiavoni—David spent in sight-seeing. He wandered, half dazed with the magnificence of its beauty, up and down St. Mark’s, much pestered by assiduous guides, who, recognizing his nationality, addressed him in a counterfeit of his own tongue; he visited the Doge’s Palace, rambled through the galleries, and crossed the Bridge of Sighs, into the Prisons; he lost himself in the intricate streets about the Merceria, and he strolled along the Piazza of St. Mark, listening to the afternoon band. It was with a sense of a good day’s work well done that he took his seat that evening at *table d’hôte*, stifled a hungry yawn, stretched his tired legs under the table and looked about him. There was the usual Italian room, with its ugly wall paper, its stove, and its painted ceiling; there was the long table, with its stiff central floral decoration; there was a glitter of gas; there was the sound of English, predominating over every other tongue. The windows looked full on the Riva: a plaintive little face peeped in, through the curtains, and a plaintive little voice solicited alms.

“Excuse me. Do you know whether there is to be singing on the Grand Canal, to-night?” said a voice in English, in David’s ear. Something in the tone at once arrested and fascinated his attention. He looked quickly down to a face turned to his, and the blood mounted into his own face with a rush. The propounder of the question was his nearest neighbour, a young girl, the owner of the most attractive face that David had ever seen. From beneath a mass of glorious red-brown hair looked a pair of the merriest, brightest blue eyes in all the world. The nose with its slight tendency to turn saucily upward, the dimpled chin, and the laughing mouth with its sweet red lips, made up a picture which dazzled and bewildered David.

“I—I—don’t know,” he stammered. “The ways of this place are strange to me; I only came into Venice this morning.” Then he bent over his soup, feeling strangely shy and embarrassed.

“Indeed. Do you intend to remain long?” The girl’s manner was, in its frank friendliness, a broad contrast to David’s own. It was hardly, perhaps, the manner usually adopted by ladies in addressing a stranger of the other sex, but its fearless ease had in it nothing deserving the mysterious adjective “fast.”

“About a week. I am going to Florence.”

“To Florence!” The girl turned on David a rapid inquiring glance. “Why! I believe,” she said, suddenly laying down her spoon, and laughing an amused little laugh, “that I know who you are.”

“Who I am?”

“Yes. How odd that I should have come upon you so soon. You are Mrs. Wilton’s nephew, David Murray.”

“Did you gain that piece of information from your fellow

fairies?" David had sufficiently overcome his shyness to venture on a tone of mild pleasantry, and some infinitesimal portion of the admiration which he felt found its way into his eyes.

"From no one more fairy-like than Mrs. Wilton herself. I am wintering in Florence with a friend, the lady opposite us." David glanced across the table towards a pompous-looking dame, in a plum-coloured silk dress and a lace cap, "and I know your aunt well. My friend and I are in Venice for a short holiday. Mrs. Wilton told us that you were coming to the 'Angleterre,' and I determined to look out for you. You wonder at my interest. Well! Mrs. Wilton told me, too"—in a tone of mock solemnity—"about Miss Balfour, and Miss Balfour and I happen to be great friends."

"What about Miss Balfour?" asked David, huskily. Joyce had retired into the background of his memory; he was almost angry with this beautiful stranger for bringing her again into prominence. He had sent away his soup plate, half empty, and he waved an impatient refusal to a waiter who approached with fish.

"Oh, you know," with a gay laugh. "You are going to Florence, in the character of a conquering hero, to carry off our heiress, Joyce Balfour."

The laugh nettled David. He coloured crimson. "It pleases you," he said, crumbling his bread impatiently, and speaking under his breath, "to make merry at my expense. But you are wrong in your statement. I don't think myself a conquering hero. I am going to Florence at Mrs. Wilton's request, to make her niece's acquaintance—nothing more. Probably I shall not like Miss Balfour, very probably she will not like me. Mrs. Wilton has no right to make schemes for other people, without their consent, and then to proclaim those schemes as certainties to all the world."

"Dear, dear! she doesn't proclaim her schemes to all the world. How fiery you are! I am, as I said, a friend of the family; it's only natural that Mrs. Wilton should be a little confidential to me."

Then the subject of Miss Balfour was allowed to drop. But other subjects presented themselves and conversation was well sustained through the long dinner. When at last the girl rose, turned to her neighbour with a bright little motion of the head—between a bow and a nod—and passed out of the room, in the company of the lady in the plum-coloured silk, who honoured the young man with a searching glance, David was astonished to remember how voluble he had been. Now that his exertions were over, he wondered what to do with himself, and when he should see the friendly stranger again. He hung about the reading room; she was not there. He toiled up to his bedroom, looked up paper and pencil, and began a sonnet on a pair of blue eyes, left it unfinished and wandered out. The moon was shining

on the open water before the Riva degli Schiavoni ; the fishing boats with their picturesque sails stood out in silver light. But David did not linger—as he once would have lingered—to dream over the scene ; he hurried on to the frequented Piazza of St. Mark. There he watched the crowds passing up and down, or seated outside the *caffès*, the officers with their jingling swords, the flower girls, the artists' models, the ladies, the newspaper vendors, the match boys, and the barefooted searchers for cigar ends. He did not tell himself that it was in search of one face that he scanned each group of promenaders or idlers. But, as in passing one of the tables before the "*Caffè Florian*" he caught sight of the lady who had accosted him at *table d'hôte*, and who was now sipping coffee and talking with her friend, he felt somehow as if a long search had been rewarded. He raised his hat, and passed on, blushing like a girl when he received a responsive bow and smile. Then he walked slowly back down the Riva to his hotel, sat up late over his sonnet, tore it up in angry discontent and fell asleep to dream of an animated face, and a pair of bewitching, bright blue eyes.

The days passed quickly. It was glorious autumn weather. Every morning David visited, in obedience to directions in his guide book, some famous churches or palaces, or he made his way to the studio of a modern artist ; every afternoon he followed his own sweet will, strayed along the narrow streets, listened to the voluble sellers and the depreciatory buyers at the shops and stalls near the Rialto, and tried his own inexperienced hand at a bargain, or perhaps he took a gondola and was rowed to the Lido, or some other island of the Lagoons, returning at sunset, when the gold and crimson of the sky were reflected in the water. At *table d'hôte* he related his adventures to his neighbour, who interrupted him with merry questionings, and who sometimes, if she happened to be in a communicative mood, deigned to respond with narrations of her own doings. All day long David looked forward to the *tête-à-tête* of the dinner hour. Every evening he went to the Piazza, and marched up and down in solitary state, his eyes continually travelling in one and the same direction, or he sought a table at the *caffè* where he could furtively watch his new friend, who was pretty sure to be in sight. In his letters to Whitechapel he never once mentioned her. For one thing he did not know her name. Once, in a fit of more than ordinary curiosity, he had cursorily glanced through a list of names in the "*Visitors' Book*," but among them all how could he distinguish the one in which he was interested ? The ladies were known by the waiter fraternity of the hotel as *les dames du numéro vingt-cinq*, the number of their sitting-room. When speaking to his neighbour, David had often had at his tongue's tip a downright question concerning her name, but he had hitherto been too shy to utter it. He fully intended to be bolder, one day. Meanwhile, in his verses—

she had found her way into most of his verses written at this period—he chose, for some fanciful reason of his own, to call her “Hera.”

It turned out that the length of the girl’s stay in Venice was identical with David’s; they were both to leave on the same day.

On the last evening in Venice David and Hera found themselves walking together, and actually unaccompanied, along the Piazza. Mooning along in his usual fashion, the young man had happened to brush against the ladies; as both he and they were bound for the “Angleterre,” it was natural that they should walk together.

But the elder lady of the company was presently pounced upon by an Italian countess, who insisted on monopolizing her attention. David moved on with Hera; he could hear a ceaseless stream of foreign-sounding English flowing on behind him.

A strange silence came over the young man. Intently—almost breathlessly—he watched his companion. She had drawn off one of her gloves; on one of her fingers was a ring, with a forget-me-not in turquoises. David wondered, with a touch of utterly unreasonable jealousy, whose hand had placed it there.

The silence seemed oppressive to the girl. “Let us hurry towards the Riva, and see the moonlight on the water,” she said. “Moonlight on water is the most correct of all Venetian beauties.”

“Certainly.” David tried to shake off his taciturnity—to emulate his companion’s gaiety. But the attempt ended in failure; he was obviously dull and miserable.

Oh, the beauty of the evening—an evening never to pass from David’s memory! How grand and solemn the Ducal palace looked in the moonlight! how still was the water, how sweetly came the sound of singing voices from the Grand Canal! On the top of the steps of one of the many bridges on the Riva both walkers came simultaneously to a standstill.

“So this is our last evening in Venice!” said the girl, resting her arms on the top of the bridge, and looking musingly down into the water.

“Why do you tell me that? surely I know it,” burst out David, savagely. The girl glanced up, startled by the sharpness of his voice.

“What’s the matter?”

“Ah me! *Sic transit gloria mundi.*”

“I beg your pardon.”

“I beg yours; I was quoting Latin. What I want to say is that—that—the prospect of bidding you good-bye is—well—is the reverse of an enlivening one to me.”

“How solemn you are,” with a laugh. “And for no reason at all. We shall often meet again.”

“Shall we?” David leaned his elbow on the top of the bridge; he bent his head down close to the girl’s, her hair almost brushed cheek.

"Of course," a little impatiently. "My friend and I go to Florence to-morrow, and, as I told you, I am a great friend of Mrs. Wilton's; I look in upon her every day."

"But I am not going to Mrs. Wilton's." David spoke in a suppressed voice; he did not raise his head.

"What *do* you mean?"

"What I say. I cannot go to her now. I had not been a day in Venice before I grew aware of that fact. But I could not—forgive me—resign the pleasure of staying on here with you. My expenses at Venice must be refunded—somehow—" with a grim smile. "You are going to-morrow; then I leave the same day for London."

"Good gracious!" The girl raised herself from her stooping position. "How changeable, and how incomprehensible you are! What has happened since you left home to change your plans so suddenly?"

"Everything has happened." Half mechanically, Hera had moved on a few paces, and David walked beside her; they descended the bridge steps and made their way slowly along the river.

"You know of—you spoke of—a matrimonial scheme for me which was the cause of Mrs. Wilton's invitation. When I left home I was free; it was at least possible that an introduction to Miss Balfour might, if my advances proved acceptable, end in the accomplishment of my aunt's scheme. Now, all that possibility is over."

"Why over?"

"I am not free now," cried the young man passionately. "Since I have met you I have learned that Miss Balfour and I could never, at best, be more to each other than good friends."

An inscrutable expression came into the girl's face. She stood still, and eyed her companion searchingly. "Surely," she said, "if you oppose your aunt's plans, you will injure your prospects for life."

"Yes," answered David, with simple candour. "My mother will be sorely disappointed; she had hoped so much from my aunt's new interest in me. I am sorry for my mother, but I don't fear the future for myself if——" David broke off.

"Won't you wait till you see Miss Balfour, before you decide on opposing your aunt's views?"

"Why should I see her?" vehemently, "the very thought of Miss Balfour is hideous to me."

"And how shall you explain your change of plans to Mrs. Wilton?"

"Explain! I shall write and tell her the truth—shall say that I have met you."

The girl's lips parted in a curious smile; she stood stock-still, facing David in the moonlight. "Whom shall you say that you

have met?" she asked, lifting her eyes suddenly to her companion's face.

"I—I—don't know; a thousand times I have wanted to ask your name. Will you tell it me now?" faltered David humbly.

"To be sure. I am Joyce Balfour."

"Joyce Balfour!" If a thunderbolt had fallen at David's feet he could hardly have been more astounded. If ever he were dumbfounded in his life, he was so at this crisis of his fate.

A merry laugh recalled his wandering wits. "Yes, I am Joyce Balfour and Mrs. Wilton's ward; it is Mrs. Wilton with whom I am staying at the 'Angleterre.' I never expected to remain unknown to you so long; men are slow at guessing; a woman would have found us out long ago. Why! there were a thousand ways of learning our names, and I often wondered why you didn't ask me mine, downright. When we first heard that you were going to stay in Venice, I persuaded Mrs. Wilton to come over here and make your acquaintance under the rose. It was no more pleasant to me than to you, I can tell you, to be under orders in matters matrimonial to Mrs. Wilton. I was no more willing to accept your advances than you were to offer them. At least, I wanted, before we were formally introduced, to know you for myself, in my own way; to see you and talk with you when you were off your guard. It is of course for you to say"—with an arch glance in David's direction—"whether you will abide by your decision to return to England to-morrow. But at least, sir"—with a saucy smile and a bright look in the blue eyes—"you will please apologize very humbly for your assurance in stating before my very face that the thought of Joyce Balfour is hideous to you."

We suppose that David's apology proved an ample one. At any rate we know that a year after the events related in our story, David was not only installed steward of Mrs. Wilton's estates in Devonshire and Somerset, but that he was also married to Miss Balfour. The first volume of poems which he offered to the world had a dedication, "To my wife Joyce."

ANNETTE CALTHROP.

A SOIRÉE AT MADAME ANCELOT'S.

SOME forty years ago, while paying a visit to a distinguished lady-member of the English colony in Paris, I happened to take up a book that was lying on the table.

"Théâtre de Madame Ancelot," I said, "and a presentation copy from the author! You know her, then?"

"Certainly," replied Lady——. "I am going to her reception this evening by way of chaperoning a young friend of mine from Aberdeen, who has a mania for literary people; and if you have no better engagement, I am privileged to introduce any one I choose, and can take you with me. You needn't stay if it bores you."

I was delighted at the idea of being admitted into a sanctum difficult of access to the profane, and readily accepted the offer.

"If you are here by ten," said Lady ——, "it will be time enough; for, if we went earlier, we should be reduced to the family circle, which, to say the least, is not particularly enlivening." At the appointed hour I found the carriage waiting, and a few minutes later we were on our way to the Rue Joubert, where the illustrious member of the "forty" and his talented wife then resided.

The apartment occupied by them was of moderate size, and furnished in the strictly Parisian style, with the regulation clock and candelabras on the chimney-piece, and the no less inevitable "poufs" and ottomans strewed about in picturesque confusion, and getting in everybody's way. A few lithographed portraits of actors as they appeared in various comedies of our hostess decorated the walls, but the principal ornament of the *salon* was a picture of considerable dimensions painted by Madame Ancelot, and representing her usual *habitués* listening to a scene from "Andromaque" declaimed by Mademoiselle Rachel. It is possible that some faint resemblance may have existed between the personages grouped around the actress and their respective originals, although I did not succeed in recognizing any of them; the interpreter, however, of Hermione was a distinct failure, and neither in face nor figure bore the slightest likeness to the great artist whose genius was then attracting all Paris to the Comédie Française.

The arrival of Lady—— made a certain stir among the twenty or thirty persons present, and she was immediately installed in the place of honour on a sofa by the fire; while the damsel from

Aberdeen, whose French strongly reminded one of that acquired at "Stratford-atte-Bowe," further embellished by an unmistakably Caledonian accent, was politely taken in hand by the academician himself. Their conversation, however, soon languished from want of mutual comprehension, and became, on the part of the fair Scot at any rate, purely monosyllabic.

M. Ancelot was then on the verge of fifty, short, stout, and pompous in manner; he had for the last year or two undertaken the management of the Vaudeville, and partly owing to the popularity of his wife's comedies, partly to the excellent company he had collected together, including Arnal, Félix, Bardou, Laferrière and the charming Madame Doche, had hitherto succeeded in making it a fairly paying concern. He had an implicit belief in his own talents as a dramatist, notwithstanding the evil fortune which had befallen the major part of his productions, and received my congratulations on the triumphant run at his theatre of Duvert's "*Homme Blasé*" with a pitying smile. "Monsieur," he said, "*pour les gens futiles il faut des futilités; il n'est pas donné à tout le monde d'apprécier la bonne littérature. On nous demande des bêtises, et nous les fournissons; voilà tout.*"

If, as is commonly asserted, a lady's age should be determined not according to how old she is, but how old she looks, Madame Ancelot must have long passed the Rubicon self-assigned by the generality of French women as the *nec plus ultra*, or in other words thirty-nine, and have been well on her way towards the shady side of forty. She did not, however, appear disposed to surrender her claim to comparative juvenility without a struggle, and dressed in a fashion rather trying to the gradual development of her figure: displaying, moreover, a far greater show of interest in the cut of a sleeve or the latest adopted *coiffure* than in the social or literary topics of the day.

"Who is that odd-looking woman talking to Madame Ancelot?" I asked Lady——, directing her attention to a remarkably plain and over-dressed female, reclining affectedly in an arm-chair, and evidently on the look-out for the homage she considered her due.

"Madame Eugénie Foa," was the reply.

The name recalled to me an anecdote I had heard concerning this well-known authoress, whom I had never met before. Originally of the Jewish persuasion, she had forsaken its tenets for those of Catholicism, and selected as the director of her conscience an abbé who combined the functions of confessor and man of the world.

"Is it a sin, *mon père*," she asked him one day, "to feel pleased when people tell me I am pretty?"

"Certainly," answered the abbé, "inasmuch as you tacitly encourage a deviation from truth."

While refreshments, in shape of various kinds of syrups,

Rheims biscuits, and, by way of compliment to "miladi," an inscrutable beverage supposed to be tea, were handed round, M. Ancelot presented me to his daughter, a quiet-looking, simply-dressed girl, and to her affianced husband, a young advocate of the name of Lachaud. The latter, whose intelligent countenance and broad expanse of forehead bespoke no ordinary talent, was then commencing his forensic career, and had already distinguished himself, on more than one occasion, as an able pleader; the high position, however, subsequently attained by him as the acknowledged leader of the Paris bar, was a secret of the future, of which on the evening in question neither he nor any one else had most assuredly ever dreamt.

At this juncture the door opened, and M. Viennet and M. Théodore Anne were announced; Madame Ancelot instantly rose from her seat, and greeted the new-comers with effusion; and her husband, after exchanging a few words with his colleague of the Academy, devoted himself entirely to the short, slightly deformed individual who had accompanied him into the room.

"Who is M. Théodore Anne?" I inquired of Maître Lachaud.

"The editor of *La France*," he replied. "An influential journalist and dramatic critic." I remembered that a new piece was to be given at the Vaudeville in the course of the week, and could therefore easily account for the manager's excessive cordiality.

Meanwhile M. Viennet, who might have sat for the "grand sec" immortalized by Gavarni, and who glanced around him with the complacent air of a monarch of all he surveyed, was entreated by Madame Ancelot to recite one of his delightful compositions.

"Your last exquisite fable," she suggested.

"Or 'l'Épître aux Mules,'" chimed in Madame Eugénie Foa.

The literary lion, who evidently only required a little pressing, would doubtless have acceded to the request, had he not been interrupted by the entrance of an elderly, simpering personage in a black wig, who, after paying his court to the lady of the house, ambled gracefully across the room in the direction of "miladi."

"The Vicomte D'Arlincourt," she whispered to me. "Shall I introduce you?"

"On no account," I answered, "I read his 'Solitaire' once, and that is more than enough for me."

Before many minutes had elapsed, the vicomte had been presented to the young lady from Aberdeen, and, seating himself by that forlorn damsel, boldly undertook the uphill task of entering into conversation with her; until, suddenly catching a glimpse of the editor of *La France*, he pounced upon him, and bore the unfortunate man away to a corner of the room, probably with the view of securing a favourable notice for "*la Peste noire*," a lugubrious drama in rehearsal at the Ambigu.

While I was debating whether to beat a retreat or not, the sound of a familiar voice struck my ear, and turning round I

beheld to my astonishment Francis Mahony, otherwise "Father Prout," close behind me, smiling Jesuitically and stealthily taking stock of the company, after the fashion of Mr. Wenham in "Vanity Fair." I had made his acquaintance at Mrs. Romer's, but, as he rarely went into society, could hardly believe my eyes.

"Well," I said, "of all men in the world, you are the last I should have expected to see."

"Merely a matter of business," he replied; "I want to talk to Lachaud about a law-suit a friend of mine is interested in, and knew I should find him here. Otherwise, this sort of thing is scarcely in my line. By the way, I met Scrope Davies on the boulevard just now, and he told me a good story of Poole which is worth repeating. He was dining at one of the cheap restaurants over the water the other evening, with three or four fellows as out at elbows as himself, when a dish of fish was served up, a mysterious looking edible which no one present could put a name to. One thought it might be intended for turbot, another voted it brill, and at last it came to Poole's turn. After staring and sniffing at it for a minute or two, 'I may be mistaken,' he said, 'but if my eyes and nose don't deceive me, it is a piece of cod which passeth all understanding.'"

It was now considerably past eleven, and M. Viennet's threatened recitation was clearly on the point of commencing; D'Arlincourt, who had at length released his victim from bondage and who had a pious horror of all literary productions except his own, was gradually edging towards the door, and finally disappeared. The opportunity was too tempting to be resisted, and waiting until the bang of the *porte-cochère* announced that the vicomte was safely on his way homewards, I quietly followed his example.

CHARLES HERVEY.

AN EAST END PROBLEM.

IN the multitude of projects that are continually being launched to abridge the evils of poverty it cannot be said that the inhabitants of the eastern districts of the metropolis have not their full share, for apart from a well-organized legal provision for sickness and distress, there exists a miscellaneous assortment of societies and institutions all striving for the happiness of the greatest number. The latter are mostly voluntary agencies and vary greatly in their character and objects. Some, springing from motives of a purely religious character, owe their origin and management to the local clergy; others originate from the munificence of private individuals, or grants from corporate bodies, while many are the offspring of that collective charity which knows no creed, but which has at heart the social advancement of the many. As the London season comes round the newspapers apprise us of the origin or progress of various philanthropic schemes, of meetings at the Mansion House or elsewhere in their aid, of coffee palaces and cheap dining-rooms being opened in Shadwell or Stepney, of workmen's and boys' institutes in White-chapel or Bethnal Green, of rookeries being cleared, and gardens and pleasure grounds being substituted for what were once burying grounds and waste places. The proceedings on these occasions are often inaugurated by some member of the Royal Family, who, to their honour, be it spoken, are ever ready to contribute their aid to every good work in the East End. The fortunate quarter in which the ceremony takes place gives itself up for the time to a species of mild excitement; it is profusely garnished with bunting, not always in the best taste or with the most appropriate mottoes, but it serves its purpose, nevertheless; while the drum and fife band of the locality plays its loyal and patriotic airs as if the stability of the kingdom depended on its exertions. There is hardly an acknowledged evil in connection with our degenerate humanity that some honest effort is not made to remedy, and although many of the most hopeful aspirations are often nipped in the bud or paralysed long before fruition, the harvest is sufficiently plentiful to justify a repetition of the seed time. In these latter days the principle is being gradually forced on us that charitable societies to be successful in their endeavours must have engrafted on their organization an element of self-help

by which the participators may receive not only temporary but lasting benefit.

It is this principle which is the basis of all the friendly and provident societies which now ramify in every part of the country, and it is greatly to be desired that a similar usage should be incorporated with the organization of every philanthropic enterprise. It has, however, many obstacles to contend with before being fully accepted by a large section of the population, both rich and poor. It is a hard lesson to teach the recipients of alms that they are forfeiting their self-respect, or the almsgivers that they are encouraging idleness and profligacy. Perhaps no subject bearing on the condition of the poor has excited so much interest of late years, or has been fraught with such meagre results as the inquiry of the Royal Commission into the nature of their habitations. The facts brought to light, although well known beforehand to those whose vocations led them to much intercourse with the poor, proved to a wider circle that something more was wanted to complete the transformation than improved dwellings and open sanitary surroundings. By a lavish expenditure such improvements could of course be effected, but after all there would remain the herculean task of bringing the knowledge of the laws of health, combined with the virtues of thrift, temperance, and cleanliness within the grasp of every occupier, be he ever so degraded. Nor is this all; for given the embodiment of the proposition, means must be organized to ensure its objects being practically carried into effect. This is indeed the crucial difficulty which besets every project of social reform, which no communistic theories have ever attempted to solve. It was at one time thought, and is still greatly to be desired, that our boasted system of national education would gradually train the minds of our youth to a knowledge of the defects of their physical surroundings, but whatever good the School Board may have been able to effect, it has made little impression in mitigating the evil complained of. The visiting clergy, the health officer, the City missionary, the lady visitor, do their utmost, and acting in concert with other philanthropic agencies much success attends their well-directed efforts, but the labourers are few in comparison with the abundant harvest to be reaped. Something more is wanted, something which will awaken an echo in the breast of the castaway, and liberate himself, and possibly his family also, from the bondage of ignorance and neglect. To express sympathy and condolence with them in trouble is often used as a means of touching the heart of the greatest offenders against law and probity, but sympathy of itself is of small value unless associated with other deeds to secure them from doing further injury to themselves and others. It is mock sympathy to give a man who is starving his breakfast without keeping in view how he has to obtain his next meal, and if that is unobtainable, to tell him

what provision the State has made to prevent its subjects from dying of privation. In our mind there is no influence more conducive to benefit the poor than personal intercourse with those above them in the social scale, and especially of ladies who have the tact to listen to their tale of woe, and the discretion not to be too lavish with their advice out of season. When such an agency is in harmony, or better still, incorporated with a goodly number of trained nurses whose work is limited to certain districts, and affiliated with other charities, and more or less with the local government, we are certain to have a basis of organization pregnant with the most hopeful results. In times of sickness and distress the mind is peculiarly susceptible of impressions which may be lasting, and among the poor at least, the barrier of reserve or indifference which at other times frequently surrounds them is overthrown by the first proffered act of kindness. All engaged in visiting the sick poor bear testimony not only to the benign influence exerted, but also to the substantial aid they receive from the periodical visits of a well-trained nurse, and even the most hardened and unimpressionable to external influences are loud in their gratitude for the help thus rendered. More than forty years ago, when sick-nursing was little known as a branch of industry, the generous-hearted Mrs. Fry conceived the idea of supplying the poor with nurses at their own homes, and founded an establishment in the City of London for this purpose which still exists in name, although it may have departed somewhat from the principles of its first foundation. A less mercantile organization was instituted by the late Mrs. Ranyard, the well-known founder of the Missing Link, or Bible-women's Mission, who supplemented the work of the latter by incorporating with it nearly a hundred trained nurses, who lived among the patients of their respective districts. This highly deserving work still flourishes under the able superintendence of the niece of the founder, and was greatly encouraged by the late Lord Shaftesbury, who appreciated the wants of the poor perhaps better than any man of his day. Another association, the Metropolitan and National, with even more pretentious objects in view, as its name imports, was formed a few years ago, and has been doing good service with the small contingent of workers it has as yet been able to employ. But the establishment to which we mainly desire to direct attention has a more local significance, since it is confined to East London and dates its origin from the time when this quarter suffered so cruelly from cholera in the memorable epidemic of 1866. The beneficial effects of the system of house-to-house visitation of the infected districts, then introduced, induced many persons interested in the welfare of the sick poor of the quarter, notably the local clergy, to continue the mission after the cessation of the epidemic, on a permanent basis, and gave it the name of the East London Nursing Society. The parties instrumental in organizing the mission were fully aware

that to achieve their ends something more was wanting than a staff of trained nurses, for this only formed a part, although a most important part, of the organization, which desired to enlist a large amount of voluntary effort for the purpose of affiliating their society with other agencies both of a legal and charitable character. At the present time the society claims the help and is in full accord with the Poor Law authorities, the Charity Organization Society, the Health officers, and above all with the charitable public, which has it in its power to give facilities for the admission of the sick to hospitals or convalescent homes, to furnish them with medical comforts, or to help the children in a poor household to the benefit of free education. The institution at present consists of twenty nurses and three matrons, who are also trained nurses, and all reside apart, but in the midst of the population of the several parishes or districts in which their services are most needed. The parochial system lends itself most readily to such an organization, as the several incumbents of the thickly-peopled parishes, assisted by ladies located in the neighbourhood, take a general superintendence of the nurses, relieving them of much responsibility with respect to the distribution of medical comforts and of the correspondence frequently required in consequence of their alliance with other charities and the local government authorities. Each parish or district in the sphere of the society's operations possesses one or more nurses, the parishioners undertaking to pay the necessary cost, which amounts to about £60 per annum for one nurse, without taking into account other items of expenditure, and it is found a wholesome rule not to open up any new district unless this sum is subscribed beforehand, and there is a reasonable prospect of its being continued. The parish must also provide suitable lodgings for the nurse, and appoint a lady-assistant or superior to control the distribution of such things as clothing, cotton wool, lint, air or water pillows, condensed milk, and other articles, sure to be wanted in emergencies. The services of ladies who volunteer for this work cannot well be over-estimated, for although their vocation may be very different from that of the skilled nurse, their advice, co-operation, and their periodical visits to the sick render them an integral part of the organization. Each keeps a register for her district, giving details of the most necessitous cases occurring in the locality, and reports of new cases, intimation of which is usually furnished her by the incumbent. By the aid of this record, combining also information from the matron and nurse, the lady-assistant is enabled to dispose of what stores she possesses in a judicious way, and to give an account of her stewardship to the committee, which meets once a fortnight at the Chapter House of St. Paul's to report progress. In consequence of this division of labour, the duties of matrons and nurses are rendered less onerous and become in a great measure limited to what may be strictly called medical work, embracing in

the term, moreover, some of the highest aims of the physician as well as of the economist, in the arrest of the development and extension of communicable disease, and by not only inculcating, but seeing put in practice, those lessons of thrift, temperance, self-denial, and above all, of cleanliness, which form the essential basis of all sanitary work. We have said that the society possessed three matrons to superintend the nursing, and it may be thought a larger proportion than is absolutely necessary; but it must be borne in mind that the matrons are also skilled nurses, that they act as pioneers and also as inspectors of the nurses and their work, besides being the confidential advisers of the managers. The office is consequently one of much responsibility and should only be filled by persons thoroughly reliable. They have to notify and visit all new cases, to select the nurses and regulate their duties and to make periodical visits to the houses where they are at work. As the ground to be traversed is very extensive, comprising some eighteen parochial districts, in each of which a nurse is placed, and dealing with a population of not less than 200,000, it is essential that the supervision of the matron should be circumscribed, which is done by dividing the territory into three sections, and by requiring the matron to live as nearly as possible in the centre of the district allotted to her.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the charitable agency, complete as far as it goes, and working wonders with the means at its disposal, is far from being able to cope with the million of population located in East London. It is, however, firmly established on a secure, if not a broad basis, in what are usually ranked among the worst quarters, and it is sufficiently expansive to extend its operations into adjoining districts, and to take in all the remaining parishes within the boundary of the inner circle should help be forthcoming. The clergy and the medical men residing in the excluded districts would gladly welcome an extension of the society's operations to their respective parishes, but the congregations representing the parishioners are too poor to burden themselves with the necessary outlay, and what is usually designated the generous public reside elsewhere, and have small opportunity, even if they desired it, of witnessing the success of the society's operations on its own grounds. The fact is that notwithstanding an occasional visit from Royalty and appeals without number in the public press, communications between east and west, or between rich and poor, with the view of improving the condition of the latter, are after all few and spasmodic. An attempt to encourage more frequent intercourse has nearly wrecked the fortunes of an important railway; and there is little hope that the famous Whitechapel highway, which in the early part of the last century was dotted right and left with the mansions of the great City merchants, will ever be restored to its ancient magnificence. It is no exaggeration to

say that strangers rarely visit these districts, or that it is a *terra incognita* to thousands living west of Temple Bar. What is worse, a very considerable proportion of the well-to-do look upon it as a region to be avoided, a place where disease in an endemic or epidemic form is rarely absent, where poverty, vice, and crime huddle together and produce their debasing influence on the population. It is hardly necessary to state that this gives a very erroneous estimate of the character and condition of the people. It would not be difficult to place one's finger on many spots in the map of London which would compare unfavourably with some of the worst districts of the East End; but these possess some compensating advantages, especially in their surroundings, to which the others are strangers. What we have mainly to contend with is a very large mass of population in which the poor greatly predominate, and in larger numbers than in any corresponding area in the United Kingdom—an area of several square miles occupied by two-story houses let out in weekly rentals and sub-rentals, without an oasis of rich people here and there interspersed, and far away from the parks and open spaces which contribute both light and life to the more favoured denizens of the metropolis. Overcrowding is the natural corollary to this state of things, and with overcrowding we must infallibly have disease in one or other of its many zymotic phases, and what many of us consider as bad, if not worse, than disease itself, because begotten of the ignorance and indifference which give rise to disease, is the silent contempt for the laws of health, which, if learnt by heart and systematically acted on, would doubtless prevent disease or greatly diminish its virulence. It cannot be too strongly impressed on the people at large that this great law of prevention is one of the greatest, if not the main effort of scientific medicine. It may also now without prejudice be looked upon as one of its triumphs, for at no previous epoch in our history has its effects been so manifest on the health and consequent happiness of the people. The impetus given to the art of preserving health by legislative Acts of a local as well as of a national character, by improving the drainage and water supply of large towns, and ensuring the purity of our food, is exhibited not only by the diminished death-rate, but in the disappearance from among us of several complaints which were the scourge of our ancestors. Such may be the natural results of a well-devised system of sanitary legislation, but they are far from meeting the much-needed requirements of the poor, to whose doors the all-important question of personal or family hygiene must be carried before much good can be effected. The house-to-house visitation of poor localities enforced in several of the chief towns of the kingdom during cholera epidemics has shown how much can be done to check the extension of that malady by precautionary measures applicable to every

household. These consisted mainly of practical advice with respect to the storage and purification of the water supply, the house drainage and the use of disinfectants, coupled with attention to individual health and the administration of medicine necessary to check the premonitory diarrhoea which is often the precursor of cholera. The instructions were conveyed by Poor Law medical officers, largely reinforced for the occasion, in many places, by medical students, and in the case of East London already referred to, by district nurses; and in all instances the offers of help were not only gratefully accepted, but in nearly every infected locality where these home measures were sedulously carried out the disease soon disappeared.

Our main purpose is to show how such an organization as we have described may be still further developed, and become a greater boon, not only to the poor inhabitants, but to every one in authority or otherwise coming within the sphere of its operations. To the medical man especially the advantage of obtaining the assistance of a qualified nurse in serious and critical cases would be hailed with satisfaction, while the action in common with Poor Law, sanitary, and voluntary agencies would lead us to hope that much more might be done in the social improvement of the class for whom we are pleading. But where, it will be asked, is the supply of women most suited for the work to be obtained? The solution of the difficulty is perplexing, and is rendered all the more so since sick-nursing, like other professions, has its mercantile side, which probably accounts for the large number now entering its ranks as a means of future livelihood. District nursing in large towns and country villages, where the nurse is left very much to her own resources, is not as a rule popular with the young women who, after a few years' probation in a London hospital, desire to better themselves in life. The more seductive spheres of occupation in public hospitals and nursing in private households will always attract the larger, and possibly the better class of women, although there may be many exceptions, leaving the residuum to the union infirmaries, work-houses, and district work, and all this in spite of the increased remunerative inducements now held out to them by Poor Law guardians and even by charitable associations. There is no denying the fact that the profession of nursing holds a very different place from what it occupied twenty years ago, and there is every likelihood as time progresses that the advance made in the training and instruction will be maintained, if not further developed. Since ladies have taken kindly to the divine drudgery, the moral support it has received from the leading members of the medical profession, as well as from the public at large, has been of such a hopeful character that it has already multiplied the aspirants for the higher offices in connection with the treatment of the sick in hospitals, and as a consequence to

recruit the ordinary ranks from a more educated class and from a wider field. Among the latter there are many whose natural gifts, character, and dispositions induce them to prefer hospital work to private nursing; and there are others whose age, long experience, and knowledge of life eminently suit them for district work, but who fail to follow it for a variety of reasons best known to themselves. Notwithstanding the tendency there may be to make sick-nursing take rank among the fine arts, it is on the other hand an egregious error to exact too much from a nurse or to expect her to take the responsibility which more legitimately belongs to the medical practitioner; still, some qualifications of a special nature are required for the guidance of those who devote their lives to the needy at their own homes, whether in town or country. These may be summed up in a few words, and consist, apart from the ordinary hospital training, of a knowledge of domestic economy, a due appreciation of the elements of sanitation, especially of such as are applicable to communicable diseases, combined with good health and mature age, for very young nurses are entirely out of place in dealing with the refractory characters with whom they must occasionally associate if engaged in this species of work. From the fact that the nurse through no desire of her own is frequently left, especially in country districts, very much to her own resources, it is necessary she should possess considerable confidence in herself, a faculty, no doubt, begotten by experience, while tact and discrimination in her intercourse with the poor are of far more value to her than in her dealings with the rich. After all, it requires no special curriculum of high culture to approach the ideal of a good parish nurse, and there must be many excellent women to whom the duties, though arduous, would be acceptable and congenial, provided sufficient inducements were held out to them to undertake the task.

From the very nature of the employment, it is self-evident that no effective system of sick-nursing among the poor can at all prosper without entailing an outlay commensurate with the extent and realized results of its mission. Although ostensibly designed to succour and save them from the last refuge of the destitute—the workhouse or union infirmary—no agency of a purely philanthropic character can have any expectation of being subsidised by the State, and any attempt to render it partially remunerative by supplying nurses to the rich is certain to debase the great object for which it has been instituted. It redounds greatly to the credit of the society to which we have so often referred that it is capable of submitting an annual balance-sheet to its members which will compare favourably, as regards economy of administration, with that of any similar institution in the country, and should it have the good fortune, which it deserves and longs for, of obtaining aid from the monied

classes, there can be no question of its utility being vastly developed.

The society from its origin has been confided to the care of a body of ladies and gentlemen who are associated with every good work in East London, and whose names, if we were at liberty to mention them, would be a guarantee of the sincerity of their motives, and of the truly Christian character of the objects in which they continue to maintain a deep and loving interest.

Among the social problems of the age in which we live, there are few so complex as those which deal with measures intended to avert poverty and distress among the labouring population; but when we can trace one of the main factors of this distress to causes over which we have undoubtedly some control, it is our obvious duty to further attempts, however humble, which would tend to mitigate the evil. It is a trite saying that no action of the legislature can elevate the mind to a knowledge of its shortcomings or prove an antidote to the ignorance or indifference with which it is too apt to contemplate its external relations; but much may be done by voluntary effort well directed to incite and foster a more wholesome feeling, with every hope that its influence will bear fruit and multiply long after the main-spring which set it in motion has passed away.

We have endeavoured in the course of this article to demonstrate, however inadequately, how such an agency is worked in one of the most needy districts of the metropolis, and with the assurance that the knowledge may prove useful to many interested in the subject, and who may possibly have similar objects in view, we respectfully submit these observations for their consideration and approval.

ON THE OLD APPIAN WAY.

THE orthodox trip taken by the tourist along the Old Appian Way as far as the famous tomb of Cecilia Metella is, for more than one reason, apt to prove disappointing. The ideal which the visitor has formed of the world-famous old road is barely realized, not for lack of objects of interest, but on account of the obstacles placed in the way of them and the expense attending it. The chief obstacle is the fact that a high wall, behind which are most of the objects of interest, bounds the view on either side for the first three miles out of Rome, and access to these is only obtainable upon payment of fees, small it is true, but irritating because of their frequency. In addition to this expense, the Roman charioteer regards the Appian Way as out of his beat and charges accordingly in spite of the most moderate of printed tariffs. He does not mind taking a heavy load of native excursionists for the same distance along the New Appian Way at a trifling charge, but as the old road is the peculiar property of foreign tourists, he argues that passage along it ought to be paid for at a peculiarly high rate. He therefore who wishes to be free and unfettered and to form a closer acquaintance with the road after he has "done" the orthodox sights in the orthodox manner, had best don his oldest suit and his thickest boots and start on foot to cover the sixteen miles which lie between the Porta San Sebastiano and Albano.

One word of advice before starting. Let him quench his thirst at the latest opportunity, or take something with him, as for more than twelve miles drink even in the shape of doubtful water, is not procurable for love or money, and he will find that the dust of the shadeless road and the burning sun above are very provocative of drought in the mouth.

We start from the battered old Arch of Drusus, which stands just within the City gate, and descend a hill ankle deep in dust and crowded with country carts, running between two high walls upon which are inscribed in huge letters the fascinating words "Via Appia Antica."

We pass the orthodox sights—the little church erected on the traditional spot where our Lord met Saint Peter, the Jewish Catacombs and those of Saint Calixtus, the Tomb of Romulus, the Circus of Maxentius, the Tomb of Cecilia Metella amongst them—and strike straight on until a brace of divergent roads relieve us of

the ceaseless traffic of country carts, and we feel that we are on the confines of a dead, solitary world.

Dead indeed it is in more senses than one.

After we pass the new fortifications there is not a building on either side of us which has not been a tomb, and, although a vast expanse of country stretches around us, there is scarcely a sound to break the almost oppressive stillness. We know that the huge masses of stone and brick and tufa and rubble which line the road and dot the fields are tombs, but in most cases time and long centuries of spoliation have played such havoc with them that their appearance is simply that of huge rubbish heaps.

Here and there we meet with a building in a fair state of preservation, a stately pile with some of the original marble casing clinging to it, adorned with graceful columns and once delicate frieze work, and bearing perhaps a few letters of its original inscription. Thrown pell-mell amidst the long grass we see fragments of statues, capitals of pillars, cyclopean blocks of masonry, but nothing is entire. All that can tell a story has long since been carted off to museums and private houses, and we are left with the merest shadow of what must have been one of the most magnificent and striking sights in the ancient world. In the Street of Tombs, which leads from the Herculaneum Gate of Pompeii, all is so fresh and bright and new that it is hard to believe that during eighteen centuries a layer of earth and ashes thirty feet deep covered it, but here on this wondrous, weird silent Old Appian Road all is decay and desolation.

The most perfect existing link which binds us to the mighty past is the old road itself. For some miles we have been ploughing through dust or stumbling over fragments and boulders, but, as we gradually get beyond the limit of nineteenth-century traffic, we are enabled to realize with what thoroughness those old masters of the world performed all to which they put their hands.

Thickly overgrown with grass, indeed, is this part of the road, so thickly that we came across a group of peasants mowing it, but if we part the grass with our feet we can see the great slate-coloured slabs of stone, laid methodically and smoothly, and can follow distinctly the double line of ruts made by the old chariot wheels. Straight as an arrow goes the old road towards the Alban Hills, straight between two raised banks which have yet to be excavated, so straight that if we follow its course with our eye along our walking-stick there is not a hair's-breadth divergence on either side.

Nor is the scene around less striking. Away to right and left stretches the shimmering expanse of the Campagna, broken only by the lines of two ancient aqueducts, of which the arches are still singularly perfect, when we remember what centuries of change have passed over them. Here and there is a crumbling ruin, or a solitary shepherd's hut, but there is no sound, no movement.

Before us rises the fantastic outline of the Alban Hills, with white towns on their slopes, and white roads zigzagging amidst their dark foliage.

We must sit down for a few minutes and gaze around over a contemplative pipe, and for this purpose we choose a square open space just off the road. Our seat is the broken shaft of a column, and about us lie a dozen of its fellows disposed in regular order around a paved space. We believe, but are not certain, that we are on the site of a temple of Hercules; but at any rate, we are close to the reputed site of the Three Taverns, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, and if, by any extraordinary chance, there should be a peasant near, he is pretty certain to point out a heap of rubbish, which might be anything, as the remains of the original posting-house.

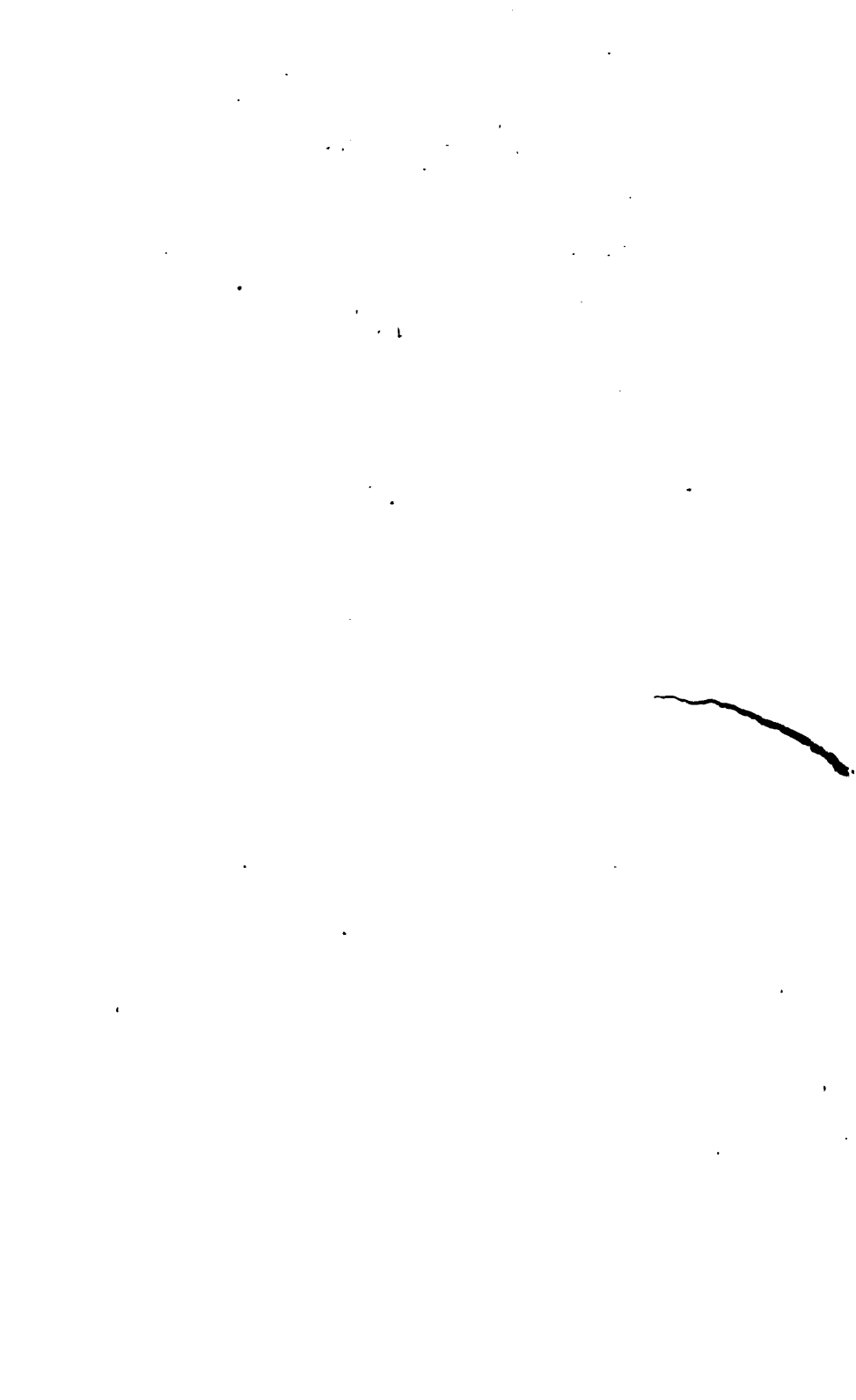
Three Taverns or not, there is a fascination about the spot which makes us extend our rest considerably. All sorts of company defile before us on the melancholy, grass-grown road, from triumphant Emperors laden with the spoil of hard-fought campaigns to the belted chivalry of the middle ages, and from Christians on their way to martyrdom, to fair-haired Goths on their way to sack and pillage. When we read in our guide-book that Alexander Severus is buried close by, we cannot help recalling a scene of very similar solitude, far away in bleak Northumberland, under the shade of that mighty rampart built, according to some authorities, by the Emperor of that name, who died at York, and when our eyes wander to the mounds which mark the tombs of the two Horatii and the three Curiatii, we are back at school again, translating

Tres Horatii vicerunt tres Curiatii.

A craving, however, for creature comforts dispels our day-dream, and induces us to plod on. The further we advance the more indistinct becomes the road itself, although its course is clearly enough defined by the dotted lines of stones along the depression between the two embankments.

Ten miles from Rome we are brought face to face with the prosaic every-day world in the shape of a railway bridge, and beyond this there is no special feature about the old road to call for remark. It runs on straight and grass-grown for a mile or so, and is then blended into the New Appian Way, a broad, well-made road which takes us straight into Albano.

Our intention had been to follow conscientiously the route taken by Horace on his memorable journey to Brindisi, but we are assured that the game will not be worth the candle, and that since the rail has supplanted the road as a means of communication, we shall have great difficulty in finding even decent sleeping accommodation, so we pull up at Albano, thirsty and dusty, but thoroughly well satisfied with our exploration of the Old Appian Road beyond the usual tourist limits.





THE LITTLE PEOPLE.

"A dreary place would be this earth
Were there no little people in it ;
The song of life would lose its mirth
Were there no children to begin it.

"No babe within our arms to leap,
No little feet toward slumber tending ;
No little knee in prayer to bend.

"The sterner souls would grow more stern,
Unfeeling natures more inhuman,
And man to stoic coldness turn,
And woman would be less than woman.

"Life's song, indeed, would lose its charm,
Were there no babies to begin it ;
A doleful place this world would be.



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LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1886.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER VIII.

CASTLES ON THE SAND.

THE second night of the "Merry Wives" had gone off even better than the first. Success adds confidence, and begins by sharpening zest, though in the end it blunts it. And the new Dr. Caius was a hit. His make-up was quaint, yet not overdone. How he strutted, he swore, he stormed, he fought, he murdered the Queen's English!—such a laughable living picture of naive self-conceit and vehement impetuosity as took Miss Hope herself by surprise. More than once I saw her turn aside to smile during that rehearsal which settled the question of Mr. Romney's admission to the company in the affirmative. "You'll do," said her nod to him plainly, when it was over.

But next day when he went to her to settle affairs, and ask her advice, now that he had definitely decided on "adopting the stage as a profession," "You want my advice," she said. "I tell you beforehand you won't take it." "Give it me all the same," he prayed confidently.

"Write a penitent letter to your father. Say you've thought better of it, and are ready to enter the shop, store, docks, or wherever it is he wants to put you."

Confounded, he muttered, abashed, "Why, I thought you were satisfied—that I——"

"You thought you played the French doctor well. I don't deny it. I don't doubt you can play other parts. I know you can a street musician's, for instance. But, bless you, what's that? Aren't there dozens who can do as much, and who, born and bred in the profession, with friends and relations at their back, have the advantage of an interloper like you? You'll want more than talent to get to the front, and from what I've seen of you I don't think you will. You're soft-hearted, and you'll be imposed upon. You're proud and independent, and all the mean ones will be your natural enemies. It's not worth my while to offer you more than

two guineas a week ; and that wouldn't be if the supers here were tolerable. You've a home, a father who's bound to provide for you so long as you behave yourself. Man alive! what do you come here for? Go back, and thank your stars it's not too late."

That, he assured her, was the one impossibility.

"I told you you'd not take my advice," she reminded him. "I gave it to ease my conscience. It suits me to keep you on my own terms."

And he joyfully agreed for the sum offered—exactly what he had been used to receive from his father as pocket-money, and on which he now proposed to live. Off he went from her presence the happiest of men, with six walking gentlemen's parts to study.

I felt promoted by his engagement. He, not I, was now the junior member of the company. We fraternized at rehearsals, as it was natural two nobodies should do. We consoled ourselves for having small parts by criticizing the principals, judiciously, but severely. Davenant's mannerisms, Annie's airs and graces, Graves' misanthropic affectations, we made fun of freely together. Only Miss Hope's dramatic power raised her above invidious remark ; whilst Francis Gifford's habitual attitude of slashing criticism on the world at large, and present company in particular, was well calculated to keep the most critical spirits on the defensive.

"Gifford ought to have been the illegitimate son of a duke," remarked Beattie Graves, satirically, after getting the worst of it in some word-skirmish. For what he was, the only son of a petty Devonshire squire or gentleman farmer, who had been shocked and grieved at his "taking to literary courses," he belied the dull propriety of his origin sufficiently well.

Then Mr. Romney said that as he had told me his history I must tell him mine. And I did. No one had ever cared to hear before—what it was a treat to me to recall—about our village of Brambledon, and the schoolmaster who gave me lessons out of hours ; the farm where my mother was born and brought up, and the cottage home where, until thirteen, I had lived very happily. Then I must tell of our ill-fated journey to London, and the sudden ruin that had left me an orphan and penniless ; then of my time at the Dulleys'. I didn't tell him about the novels, or Miss Alice's romance, or about Master Tom ; at least, not then.

Begone dull care! That was our motto! The theatre filled, the papers flattered, the prestige won by the brilliant performance of old favourites, we trusted was paving the way for a good reception of the new drama, "Under the Greenwood Tree," now in active rehearsal. I was arduously studying the role of a milkmaid, James Romney that of a burglarious under-gardener. How he made me laugh when now and then behind the scenes he took off the provincial stage villain for my entertainment.

"I like to hear you laugh," he said, "it sounds so natural. I think you'd put spirits into any company you were in."

"Oh, it's only animal spirits," I said, without thinking.

In sooth, if one of us had ever thought or looked round, good-bye to gay spirits, you know. Miss Hope—dark rumour spoke of a spectre ever behind her, that of complex, long-gathering, hopeless insolvency. There was but a step between James Romney and pennilessness, or the self-humiliation he dreaded worse. Mr. Gifford had before him the all-probability of a fourth failure to make his mark as a dramatic author, which he had vowed should be his last, and for evermore relegate him to the ranks of critics; Davenant, the certainty of his fiftieth birthday coming on next month. True, Annie and Beattie Graves had nothing special to apprehend, but they were the least merry of us all. For me, the shadow of a hitch in my budding fortunes might stamp them out—to quote a triple mixed metaphor from one of those dear old novels. To fall ill meant the hospital; to lose health, the workhouse; to fall in love or be made love to was unlikely to mean any good to me, as I was learning fast.

If I liked James Romney it was all—so I thought—because he never paid silly compliments, or made silly speeches it might put the wisest girl at her wits' end to meet as she should. Virtue, its own reward, is, in certain stations, its only one. I don't say people think the worse of you, or see any harm in it; still, strict propriety is regarded as neither necessary nor advantageous, and you dare not flaunt it in folks' faces. To snub the leading actors of your company, or some one of its patrons, may be as much as your engagement is worth. I meant to be a perfect dragon of virtue all the same. But it would puzzle the Sphinx, at times, to steer clear at once of giving offence, of seeming to give yourself airs, and of giving encouragement you didn't intend.

I was growing pretty quick of fence; but one evening a smart young hanger-on of Lord Harry Fopstone, Annie's devotee, who had smuggled himself behind the scenes, in his lordship's wake, struck up a conversation with me at the wings, in a style not to my taste.

I was chilling—he took it for coquetry. I got angry—he treated it as make-believe. Perhaps I thought him more insolent than he was, for James Romney was within sight of us, and I dreaded lest he should think I was enjoying myself. At last I could bear it no longer, and to the man's simple question:

"Do you ever walk on the pier at five, when the band plays?"

"*Never!*" I made simple answer, but with an eloquent emphasis and action I should have sought for in vain on the stage.

He beat a retreat, disgusted, and I heard James Romney behind me smothering a laugh. I had not known he was so near, and was vexed he should have overheard.

"Well done," he said, coming round to my side. "That was a facer."

"I lost my temper," said I, ruffled still.

"Serve the idiot right. Give me leave to knock him down next time for you, Lizzie; I was quite ready, but you floored him without assistance."

"Did I? Don't call me Lizzie; you're as bad as—as any one," I faltered disconsolate, ready to cry.

"Now that's not fair." He spoke quietly; but I saw I had put him into one of his silent rages. I was too put out myself to be pacified in a moment, and added unsteadily, "You'd have spoken just as he did, to Annie Torrens—to any other girl."

"Not to you," he said; "it's not the same."

"You mean that they like it and I don't. No, I can't, I won't. But it's so hard, for I've got to take care of myself, and there's no one to help me or to care if I succeed or not."

It was all so dreadfully true, that I choked a little over the last words. I had never meant to have spoken them, and looked up, adding quickly, "Don't mind what I said. When I have a bitter feeling I must speak it out and get rid of it. It's the only way."

James Romney's honest young eyes were fixed on mine with an intentness that startled my thoughts out of their track. His face brightened; I had never seen it so; he was holding out his hand, and began earnestly:

"Miss Adams, I——"

I don't know what he was going to say. I knew it was something I should have liked to hear, but that for both our sakes it had better not be said. I just took his hand, saying frankly and friendlily, "Thank you, Mr. Romney," and turned quickly away, lest he should think, from the strange colour I felt myself growing, that I was beginning to like him, as I could not help doing, and as it first shot across me then, with a throb of joy, mingled with fear, he might be beginning to like me.

We could do no more mad thing than get fond of each other, we two. What could it mean? One of two old sad stories. A light love, degrading to us both, fatal to me—or a ruinous, starving marriage, out of our station—a lifelong struggle against the stream. Till then I should have denied the need of asking myself the question. James Romney was no hero approved, nor a saint, nor a fascinating sinner, nor handsome, nor rich, nor a genius. How should he ever be more to me than a pleasant comrade?

Yet, when I am old and forget other things, I shall still remember every word that passed between us in the foolishly happy days that followed, one day in particular.

The sun shone, there was no rehearsal, the opportunity was good for a holiday outing. Mr. Gifford was to drive us over to Talaton sands. It had all been settled the night before, after

supper. "A personally-conducted picnic," so Beattie Graves defined it, with Gifford as conductor.

"Talatan's the place," said the latter directly. "Planned by nature for a picnic."

"What will it cost to get there?" asked Miss Hope, who was subject to intermittent fits of pseudo-economy, that imposed upon no one but herself.

"That depends how you go. On foot it costs nothing. Donkeys are cheap; a four-in-hand might run into money."

"Send round the hat, then proportion expenses to receipts," suggested sensible Edwin Davenant. Out of regard, perhaps, to the slender purses of some of us, Dame Quickly's pouch was the chosen receptacle for the coins; yet, when they were counted, I had a shrewd guess at the giver of each.

A sovereign: Miss Hope. Munificence or nothing, was her motto. A threepenny bit: Annie, on my salvation! She first pretends not to see it, then, struck by a happy thought, glances knowingly at E. A., and it passes for mine! whilst I had thrown in the half-crown I was saving towards a new umbrella I wanted sadly!

Two shillings: Davenant; discreet in all matters, great and small. Five: Beattie Graves. Ten: Mr. Gifford, I had seen it in his hand. Another sovereign: and there goes the half of James Romney's first week's salary in advance!

"A matter of three pounds," Gifford announced. "I'll contract for that. Lunch and then tea. I can't do more for the money."

Next day at eleven a break stood at the door, amid a crowd of idlers, apparently expecting us to mount in fancy dress! Strange tales were abroad of our doings. Had we not beguiled the night policeman into the belief that we were fairies? Had we not given an ecclesiastic on the rail every reason to think he had fallen among lunatics? Disappointing, to see us come forth in every-day apparel; Miss Hope in the darkest of serges; Annie, who had recently removed from the Swan to the Métropole, where she had friends staying, arrived thence, all flounces, laces, and puffs, that caught in everything, her gloves with as many buttons as she counted admirers to fasten them. Miss Adams—ah, how well I see now that your nineteen years and the fact that you had not been long enough on the stage for gas and rouge to tell on your complexion, were your only adornment. At the time I thought much of the pink cambric I had sat up late to complete. Graves, in a shepherd's plaid suit, American straw hat, and large bandana, was far the most striking object in the break, as Gifford took the reins, Mr. Romney the box seat beside him, and we drove off amid cheers, possibly derisive, of the youth of Plymstone.

Talatan Sands, over a mile long, stretching across Redcombe Bay, have "the fatal gift of beauty:" fatal, as bound, some time,

to draw thither that visiting crowd which kills those very charms of solitude, freedom, and wild nature visitors come to seek. But at this time, some sixteen years ago, it was but just creeping into notice as a "health resort." The drive for miles led along the uplands bordering the coast. Then the road, curling round sloping woods, descends to the sea-level, and runs straight along the sands to the village of Redcombe, clustered under the rocks at the farther end of the bay.

A shout of admiration broke from our party. We were driving through a flowery waste; the sands, right and left, a glorious field of sea-poppies, yellow and scarlet, mixed with masses of purple bugloss. On the beach a row of stalwart fisher-girls were hauling in their nets, and shoals of silvery mackerel glittered in the sun. On the land side the flower prairie skirted a long freshwater lake—or ley, as they call it—where moor-hens nestled in the tall, thick reed beds.

Miss Hope called to Gifford to drive slowly.

"Not too slowly," pleaded Beattie Graves. "I perish of hunger."

Clattering into the village, our charioteer, with proper flourish, pulled up before a poor-looking inn, beside which the Swan was a palace. Only a small stolid infant, finger in mouth, stood by to gape at our entry, whilst our driver, flinging the reins to Mr. Romney, leapt down and gave a vigorous tug to the bell, which tinkled feebly in response.

A female head in curl-papers appeared at the upper window, then signalled our arrival within. The master of the house came to the door and eyed our caravan, half intimidated; whilst Gifford, in his offhand way, ordered stabling for the horses and lunch on the spot.

The ostler came out, but, at a wink from his landlordship, merely stood at the horses' heads, whilst the other, stroking his chin, appeared to demur.

"Lunch, sir?" he repeated blankly, as if the order given had been for thunder and lightning.

"Well, it's past breakfast-time," Gifford represented. "What is the matter? There are only seven of us, and we shan't be particular."

"Seven is a good many." His eyes rested on the singular figure of Graves, with an unflattering expression.

"That man's kept a pike," whispered the comedian in my ear. Gifford resumed:

"You mean you've only eggs and bacon. Well, we'll do with that; with whatever you've got in the house, if it's only bread and cheese. But there's a glorious haul of mackerel on the beach yonder; only look sharp, for there's a gentleman in there," pointing to Graves, "who's ravenous, and would eat you without remorse if you kept him waiting long."

"Sir, I don't know that I can oblige you," was the reply, definitely given.

Gifford stood astounded at the rebuff. Naturally indignant, and remembering his maxim about innkeepers, he began to storm.

"Call your place an inn? Put up 'good entertainment for man and beast,' then tell a party arriving early that you can't entertain them at all! What do you mean? Do the best you can for us, or I'll show you up in the *Western Morning News* as the keeper of a trumpery sham tavern, where tourists in the height of the season won't find so much as a crust of bread or a new-laid egg in the house."

The proprietor bridled up. "Nothing in the house? with a first-class leg of mutton steaming before the kitchen fire?"

"Leg of mutton? The very thing!" struck in Gifford, calming instantly, and all our countenances rose. "Why didn't you say so at once? Up with it, man. Whatever your number to lunch, there's sure to be enough for seven more." Then, as Cerberus still barred the threshold, "Don't tell me you're so overcrowded here as that."

"Sir, it's not the quantity of my guests, it's the—the——"

"The *what*?" thundered Miss Hope, stepping to the fore with so wrathful, so menacing an aspect that he retreated a step, and stood looking frightened, obdurate, and foolish.

"Speak out," said Gifford sharply. "Have you fever in the house?"

"Sir, I have two ladies of rank and title. They have been staying here for a month, on the quiet. I've only one dining-room, and let them have it for themselves. Few travellers come here for refreshments, and nobody as yet has objected to my arrangements."

"Well, we don't object," Gifford returned impatiently. "It's your dinner, not your dining-room, we want. How do you arrange for passing tourists?"

"I've laid for some in the kitchen and others in the garden," he ventured timorously. "Shall I put a table for you out of doors?"

"Put it on the beach if you like, only make haste about it."

"You shall not," said Miss Hope, advancing with flashing eyes, thoroughly incensed. "Is this, or is it not, an inn? Have you, or have you not, a public dining-room? If yes, your lodgers cannot exclude us. If not, you are obtaining custom under false pretences."

The culprit, appalled, looked helplessly from one to the other, but gave no symptom of yielding.

"Man, I *insist*," she resumed, adding with imperious scorn, "If their ladyships will not lunch in one room with us, it is they, not we, who ought to give place. Kitchen or garden; let them choose."

She had put her foot down and taken her stand. Cerberus, worsted, fairly turned and fled, gently closing his door in our faces. Just then my eye and James Romney's chanced to meet, and sounds of laughter, past suppressing, escaped us.

"You may laugh," she said, turning on us scornful and irate. "I see nothing droll in a churl's affront to the acting profession. I don't believe he keeps that room private. I heard him say to his groom, 'The people from the Plymstone Theatre.'"

"How on earth did he find us out?" wondered Mr. Romney, delighted to class himself among the despised "us."

"How?" burst out Davenant viciously, whose annoyance seemed intense. "It's thanks to you, Graves, with that infernal seaside rig-out. Why, the whole world might know you for an actor across Clapham common."

"Should I be ashamed of my calling? Should I hide sock and buskin under a bushel?" declaimed our comedian. "Never! Perish the aristocracy, but let art thrive!"

"Art!" with unutterable disgust. "An escaped Christy Minstrel—that's what you look like."

"I'm tremendously sorry, my dear fellow," Graves declared, but I fear he tremendously enjoyed the situation, which was simply comic to those who had no dignity to wound. The ostler by the horses' heads, grinning at our discomfiture; Miss Hope looking thunderclaps; Davenant, a whole lost romance starting up in his head. Seated by Lady Mary at lunch at a roadside inn, he and she make acquaintance. Is taken for a *fils de famille*, an *attaché* at the least—mutual appreciation. He reveals himself at last as "a poor player," but still they part with regret. Pleasant reminiscence for the remainder of his life. Graves' sole anxiety was for his dinner, but it was strong. Finally, on Mr. Gifford, as leader, devolved the disagreeable responsibility of conducting the war.

"I never was so insulted in my life," Miss Hope announced, looking at him "darkly." "You stand by coolly, Mr. Gifford, to see it."

"My dear lady, am I not the insulted one too? I might call Cerberus out—we should be no better off." It seemed indeed a deadlock.

"There are three courses before us," he resumed, after a pause.

"I wish there was one," put in Graves hungrily.

"We may drive back to Plymstone and lunch on the way."

"On seaweed and sand pies! No, thanks," was the general rejoinder.

"Or we may insist and storm the premises; we have superiority of numbers. Or——"

What the third course was remains unknown, for here Cerberus reappeared with an altered mien, significantly throwing open his doors, and mumbling explanations. Their ladyships had been

most kind, most obliging, begged him not to trouble himself or his guests on their account. Plainly they had not the smallest objection to partaking of one leg of mutton at one table with ourselves.

Peace was partially restored. Miss Hope stalked haughtily into the dining-room, flung down her gloves, and looked keenly round, as though detecting a slight in every crease of the table-cloth. Covers for all were quickly laid, and the leg of mutton was brought in and deposited before Beattie Graves, who had seated himself at the bottom of the table. Before we had time to dispute whether we should wait for the absentees, there sailed in an elderly, fragile-looking lady in black, and a young girl in a dress as simple as my own. They bowed without looking at us, and were taking their seats at the opposite end when I heard the younger lady whisper aside:

"Mother, it's Mr. Gifford."

And there was our conductor exchanging friendly greetings with the ladies both.

I saw the cloud on Miss Hope's brow deepen. She moved to the farthest end, next to Beattie Graves. It seemed natural Mr. Gifford should sit by his acquaintance, taking his place next the mother and opposite the daughter, into the chair on whose other hand Davenant slipped instantly.

We five meant to be jovial, but succeeded ill. Miss Hope was silent as the grave; Annie frankly bored; Graves too busy carving to speak. Mr. Romney and I discoursed in whispers, but the damp soon chilled us. At the other end conversation flowed apace. The elder lady was a beautiful talker, in a style quite new to me. She skimmed every subject and took off the cream. The younger spoke less, but she had starry eyes that gave point to the simplest remarks. Her singular prettiness was provoking by the effect of its quality. It made Annie look like an overdressed lady's-maid; Miss Hope a Gorgon; myself, I am sure, a thumping hoyden. She was like a fascinating child, though with nothing childish or childlike about her expression, which, whether grave or gay, was never happy.

The livelier those four became, the duller grew we. How nimbly and gracefully they slid from one subject to another, however far apart, like skilful performers on the trapeze. Lord C——'s engagement; the electric light at X—— Castle; the last successful novel; Irish agitation; outcast London; the great divorce case; the new bishop. My head spun round, but they kept it up without getting dizzy till the dessert of damp biscuits and dessicated raisins was brought in. The two ladies then rose and withdrew, shaking hands with Mr. Gifford as he opened the door for them, the mother most affably, the daughter with curious, sudden distance.

"Who are your friends?" Davenant put the question the

instant the door-handle clicked behind them. "I know their faces perfectly, but where we've met I can't think."

Gifford hesitated, then answered constrainedly, looking like a martyr at the stake:

"It is the Dowager Duchess of Southwall and Lady Mabel Pemberton."

What a solemn pause was that! It was Annie who broke it, speaking up with decision:

"Well, for a duchess, I dare say she's a great dowdy. And as for the girl, in an old cotton—— why, Lizzie, there, is better dressed."

"Duchess of Southwall—Lady Mabel," repeated Davenant, striking his forehead. "Why, of course! She was the beauty of her first season, a few years ago. Married her cousin, Mr. John Pemberton, heir-presumptive to Lord Castlemere. He has a place somewhere in Ireland. How stupid of me not to remember!"

"Ah yes; how you met at court," rejoined Graves slyly.

"Beauty? I call her plain," said Annie conclusively. "Thank goodness we're rid of them both. What shall we do now?"

Davenant said he was going for a stroll.

"He'll lie in wait till they come out and then meet them by accident," said Graves to Annie. "Come, let us follow him; it will drive him wild."

So they went. Mr. Romney and I had sauntered out on the balcony. Suddenly glancing back into the dining-room, he whispered significantly, "Stormy weather!"

Looking round, I saw Gifford and Miss Hope left to an unsought *tête-à-tête*. His look of fixed gravity and complete absence of mind seemed to incense her afresh.

"Why don't you go to your friends?" she asked abruptly by-and-by.

"I can scarcely call them so," he said formally.

"Indeed!" she replied with a lurking derision. "You had better join them. I hear them in the room above. As for me, I am going to smoke my cigar under their window."

"You won't do that," he said, with quiet insistence rather than entreaty.

"Who says so?" she demanded with asperity. "What are they to me more than I to them?"

"Could I have avoided the meeting," he said distinctly, "I would."

Slightly appeased, she began something in a milder tone we did not stay to hear, for so much was plain both to me and Mr. Romney, that we were not wanted.

"Come for a row on the ley," he said.

Stairs led down from the balcony, and we set off towards the sheet of water close by.

"Is there a boat, really?" I asked, thinking he had spoken at a venture.

"Just a tub and a pair of sculls. Get in, Miss Adams, and I'll shove you about."

I got in, still musing over the scene just witnessed. When I looked up we were far out on the ley. My oarsman was an expert.

"They'll make it up now," he averred sagaciously.

"But what drives her so mad?" I wondered aloud.

"Jealous!" he said profoundly.

"Of that pretty child? But she is married. And he was only civil. Miss Hope had——"

"No earthly reason for making a scene. Well?"

"I thought," I said meekly, "people were only jealous like that when they were in love."

"Well," he said again, amused at my *naïveté*, "and suppose that were the reason? Now do you see?"

I was too startled to speak—startled out of my girlish blindness, yet as far as ever from seeing clearly.

"It seemed unlikely," I said presently at random.

"Why? He wouldn't thank you for the compliment. She's not the first. Gifford's one of those fellows—you'd say he'd only got to throw the handkerchief——"

"But Miss Hope is so matter-of-fact, so masculine, and independent."

"Even men fall in love sometimes," remarked James Romney seriously.

"Do they?"

"*Don't they!*"

"They say so."

"You don't believe? So young and so untender!" We laughed.

He was letting one oar stand idle now, and half splashing, half pushing us along with the other, as we floated aimlessly in and out of the reed-beds, among the lilies and the lake-birds.

"I don't blame them—they've so little time," I remarked philosophically.

"Well, I'm only three-and-twenty, yet I've been in love already."

"Oh, I believe you, there."

"With a married lady."

"Mr. Romney!"

"My cousin, the beautiful Mrs. Meadows. She was thirty and I twelve when it began."

"Oh," in a different tone.

"She's past forty now, and a grandmother, and not beautiful; her voice is too loud and her complexion gone, and—well, yes, Miss Adams, her hair is turning grey. Perhaps I laugh at myself for a fool——" He stopped, gave a vigorous tug to the

oar, which sent the boat skimming swiftly. "You will," he added.

"Because?"

"I can never see her come into a room or hear her name spoken without the old odd feeling of having received a home-thrust. Match that if you can, for constancy," he concluded with cool gravity.

"Some day I'll try," I answered vaguely, and we drifted on awhile in silence, stopping now and then to laugh at the moorhens turning summersaults in the water, like boys making catherine-wheels in the street.

We were drawing near two figures seated on camp-stools on the bank. As we passed we recognized the distinguished lady visitors, the innocent cause of so much trouble to ourselves. The younger was sketching. They might have seen us through the reed-beds, but omitted to notice us, or to remember how well voices carry on the water, as they conversed aloud on the unusual occurrence of the incursion at Redcombe of a company of players.

"It was very interesting; just like a scene out of 'Wilhelm Meister,'" said the sketcher, in her soft, clear, caressing child's voice. "But did you ever see such a funny piece of vanity as the man who sat next me? Leander, I should think, his name was."

We looked at each other. "There we all go down," muttered Mr. Romney, "like ninepins."

"That very plain woman acts finely, people say. What is hard to believe is that she can look well on the stage," said the mother. "But that was a pretty fair girl in pink. I liked her face."

"That's you, Miss Adams," put in Mr. Romney.

"What they call a singing chambermaid, I suppose," said the daughter playfully.

"I feel tempted to take the box Harry Fopstone offered us for Mr. Gifford's play next Saturday night."

"Would you be well enough to go?"

"If not, John will be with us then, and can take you. But I should like it. They say these performances are something out of the common."

We had floated out of earshot and were laughing heartily. We were not hurt by their airy contempt; just then we did not want to change with duke or duchess. There was, after all, nothing so delightful as to be young members of a theatrical company, with an enterprising directress like Miss Hope, and a brilliant dramatist like Mr. Gifford, whose fortunes, in which our own were directly involved, opened up all sorts of pleasant possibilities.

We settled it all. Miss Hope and Francis Gifford should marry. He should write successful dramas, she should act in them. They would open the Albatross again, with a picked

company, in which we should both obtain permanent engagements; Mr. Romney as farcical comedian; I should very soon have the juvenile lead. Our salaries would be raised at once. Five pounds a week would not be too much to expect, and that, said Mr. Romney thoughtfully, was £520 a year.

"No; £260," I corrected him.

"£260—each," he said as before.

He had drawn in the sculls, ceased pretending to row, reclining idly against the side of the boat. I sat looking hard at my gloves that lay in my lap, at the water oozing through the planks, at the weeds, the dragon-flies, the rullocks—anything to escape the steady gaze of his blue eyes, which I felt searching my blushing face, however I might avert it.

"Now I've told you the 'story of my heart,'" he said in a jesting tone, that contrasted oddly with the fixity of his expression, "suppose you tell me yours?"

"Suppose there is none to tell?" I answered.

"You mean—you think men aren't to be trusted; don't tell the truth when they declare they've told you that story?"

"Not the whole truth, ever."

"No, that I haven't," he broke in quickly and very low. "Quite right—but that's what I would do now, if you would let me."

I shook my head faintly, but my colour came and went; my lip quivered. I felt no mistrust, only a longing to let the hand he had taken remain in his for as long as he chose to keep it, and a wild, vain wish that all life were as plain-sailing and as perfect as this cruise on the ley. We let the boat drift on, unthinkingly—talking little, almost as if we feared to break the charm of feeling that we understood each other without—till it entangled itself in some weeds, near the bank of sea-poppies and daisies growing together, with sea-gulls and field-larks soaring overhead. There it rested, its occupants forgetting the world outside it in the pastime of exchanging half-serious, half-playful words of no moment whatever except to themselves, just then, just there, as it fell upon just that particular day.

The voices of our comrades, shouting to us in chorus from the banks afar, reminded us of their existence. Taking the oars Mr. Romney speedily brought us back to our starting-point, where the group awaited us with cartloads of banter ready.

"What have you been after, you two, eh?" began Annie.

"Eavesdropping," he replied coolly. "The two ladies who dined with us are out sketching, and we heard them talking us over. Wouldn't you like to hear what they said?"

He teased them awhile, then announced, "News for you, Gifford. They're coming to see us act. First night of the 'Greenwood Tree.'"

Sensation. Mr. Gifford alone made no comment; the actors, elated, openly professed their satisfaction.

"Get Danvers to spread the report," said Graves, "then success is secure. When people are tired of the drama they can look at duchess and *vice versa*."

Miss Hope had recovered her equanimity and seemed in the sweetest of tempers. Certainly Mr. Gifford showed no desire to linger at Redcombe. The break was brought round and we drove home in the cool of the evening, a more silent party than we had started. Some were dozing, some reflecting, some castle-building, and every now and then Beattie Graves would startle us by exclaiming:

"I've cut a leg of mutton for a duchess! Think of that! There's a piece of news to write home to my wife!"

CHAPTER IX.

STORMY PETRELS.

"MISS TORRENS, once more I must beg you to keep to the text. Please to recollect that the words of this play are mine, or understood to be so. The ill effect of things said that ought not to be said, and things left unsaid that should be said, falls upon me. That scene again, if you please, from 'I felt you loved me always.'"

So Mr. Gifford next morning at rehearsal, to his heroine, May. And Annie to fume and fret, and revenge herself by repeating the words in an inane and aggravating manner.

It was the fourth skirmish they had had that rehearsal, each fiercer than the last. Mr. Gifford could be sharp of tongue, and Annie, in her serene self-complacency, enjoyed exasperating him. She was discontented with her part, which was subordinate to Miss Hope's. She urged the author to "write it up," to take the more telling speeches from Lionel and Zed and give them to May. In the delivery of her own she showed the loftiest disregard for the author's wording; a common habit, but one which she carried to peculiar lengths, and of which Mr. Gifford was peculiarly intolerant. To get at something like what was written seemed the height of her endeavour. The scene was the love-scene with Lionel, and Gifford was reading the part for Davenant, who was absent. Between the caressing phrases of tenderness came passages of a contrasting temper.

"Why these tears, dearest?" asks Lionel.

"Because I love you," cooed Annie, "like I did ever. Give me that flower to keep as a proof of your faith. My heart and my life is yours."

"Ever mine," he should rejoin, fondly. Instead Mr. Gifford rejoined in his own character, and anything but fondly.

"As I did ever, 'Pledge,' not 'proof,' please, and 'my heart and life are,' not 'is,' 'yours.'"

Annie laughed insolently, her temper shaken by previous jars.

"Come, Mr. Gifford," she replied, "I give the sense, *such as it is*, and that's enough, I consider."

"There's the grammar, or ought to be," muttered Miss Hope aside to herself.

"Such a fuss as you make about the words," continued Annie, derisively. "Your play must be a poor concern. It's all over with it if somebody says 'brownish-white' for 'whitey-brown,' or 'Good morning' for 'Good-day.'"

"Pray," Gifford returned instantly, "what would be thought of a Hamlet who gave us the sense of his soliloquy with words at hap-hazard?"

"To be, or not to be, that's what I'm thinking,
Whether it's better, on the whole, to pocket
The affronts, and so on, of a cruel fortune
Or to take arms against a peck of trouble,
Have done, and shut up shop!"

There was a general titter. Annie, in a fury, retorted with supreme contempt:

"Shakespeare's words are one thing, Mr. Gifford; yours are another."

"And yours, pardon me, Miss Torrens, are a third. Once more, if you please, from 'Dearest love.'"

But the strife, far from mending, grew obstinately worse, until, in a later scene with Zed, Annie, disgusted with the simplicity of her part, fell to indulging in a kind of by-play so foreign to the author's intent that his displeasure broke out peremptorily.

"Excuse me, Miss Torrens, you misread the purport of this scene. May is a country-girl, and *not* a coquette. She is not trying to captivate her old playfellow, and amuse herself by tormenting him. Your reading of the character is a blot on the play, and damages everything. You must revise it, and render it as clearly indicated."

"Mr. Gifford, I'll not be dictated to in those terms," said Annie grandly, and flinging down the book in a rage, she marched off the scene.

Mr. Gifford and Miss Hope exchanged silent looks. The question of Miss Torrens' future subordination was at stake, and they accepted her challenge.

"Miss Adams, be so good as to step forward and read the part of May," said the author, with ill-concealed anguish, picking up and handing me the book. I scarcely needed it, yet at first dared not lift my eyes from the page, lest I should skip a word, or say "which" for "that." I was not expected to act, but in reading, merely, felt tremblingly nervous—until Charlotte Hope's voice falling in, by the sheer force and truth of its expression set all things in tune. She gathered up the scattered threads of the play,

concentrating interest on herself. To Zed's passionate utterances thus spoken, May's responses came easily and naturally. The scene went smoothly, and elicited a slight murmur of applause.

Perhaps Annie heard it, for she here reappeared, having recovered her self-control, if not her temper.

"Do you go on with it or not?" inquired Gifford, with frigid composure.

For all reply she took the book from me, the dialogue proceeded, and she finished her task with care and good effect. But neither she nor the author trusted themselves to speak to each other again; and, the rehearsal over, Annie went off to the *Métropole* with some friends who were waiting to escort her. Mr. Gifford was exulting in his victory.

"She knows we can't spare her," he remarked, "and thinks she can ride rough-shod over us. It was time to draw the line."

"I dislike her acting in it more and more," said Miss Hope. "She's adjusting her dress and practising the play of her eye-lashes when she ought to be stupefied by Zed's love confession. As like a country-girl as a kangaroo!"

"She's not what I intended, nor what May obviously ought to be," he returned, imperturbably; "but she is attractive; she's a name; she draws; and she's friends who control the papers. What would you have?"

Miss Hope said nothing, but choosing a moment, she took me aside, and whispered:

"He thinks he's got her in hand. I know better. Say nothing to anybody, but be ready with your understudy to replace her if she throws up her part or makes trouble to delay the performance. The play *must* be produced on Saturday, or it's all over with me and this campaign. I think you're word-perfect, which is more than Annie ever will be. Come to my room by-and-by and I'll coach you."

She lessoned me for three hours. I thought my dramatic deficiencies on the increase, as I saw them start clearly into view by the light of Miss Hope's proficiency. She coached the hoyden, May; she coached the blind fiddler, the toothless rustic, the gentleman lover Lionel, all equally well. And I, who had been so proud to call myself an actress! I might as well have fancied myself a member of Parliament!

The fact—let stage-struck amateurs bear it in mind—is, that more people than not have a turn for acting, and with a little practice may pass muster on the stage; but not for that have they made the first step on the ladder of dramatic art. Between Annie and myself there was little difference but that of experience. Between us and Charlotte Hope was a gap which, rare genius apart, only a still rarer industry could lessen.

We played the "Little Treasure" that night, with Annie in her best and favourite part. She won applause; she appeared in a

heavenly humour. Mr. Gifford was confident she would give him no further trouble ; but Miss Hope was a truer prophet. Next morning, as we met for full rehearsal, and were waiting for Miss Torrens, lo ! instead of her comes a message from the Métropole to say she is ill and cannot attend.

Mr. Gifford changed colour. Time pressed ; every hour was of dire importance. Miss Hope took counsel with him aside. To postpone the rehearsal was fatal, she insisted. Better I should take the part and keep it, if need be. He yielded perforce, though in frank despair, and I felt a blighting contempt upon me as I was summoned from the ranks.

Two things I could and would do ; speak his words accurately, and keep my eyes and lips and so forth from frivolous pantomime. For the rest, my modest aim, to get through without disgrace, I appeared to have achieved. Gifford breathed again. It was such a comfort to have a May who would do as she was told, and not adopt a reading of her own, designed to captivate the weakest heads in the stalls, that the management bore kindly with her inexperience. Miss Hope was pleased because I played up to her lead ; Davenant, because I let him have the stage when he wanted it ; Gifford, because I gave the words he had set down. When it was over, he made me a formal approving statement, endorsing Miss Hope's previous decision.

"Miss Torrens, I believe, is trying to annoy us by forcing us to defer the play. Sooner than that, you shall take May's part on this occasion. Indeed, I'm beginning to think I'd rather you played it. The part is not prominent enough—it will never content her."

"Until she's made it or herself prominent," struck in Charlotte, "by wearing diamond drops in her ears, and costly rings on her fingers, as her way is in rustic parts."

Gifford shuddered, and looked hopefully at me, who, having no jewels to display, might safely be trusted not to wear them.

The next night "As You Like It" was played, in which Annie did not appear. Each morning came the same message from the Métropole that she was too ill to come to the rehearsals, which proceeded quietly without her. Friday night was the dress rehearsal. Hardly had we begun to assemble when in sailed Miss Annie Torrens, all silks and smiles and readiness to return to her duties.

She knew her game well, but her adversaries met her with a calm and determined front that took her totally aback. They were prepared for this *coup*. Mr. Gifford significantly expressed his surprise at her appearance this morning, expecting to resume her part, adding :

"I regret that you have made it impossible. You have absented yourself from the needful rehearsals, during which important changes have been made in the piece, necessitating fresh study

of your rôle, which it is now too late for you to give. You have virtually thrown up the part. Miss Adams plays it, by arrangement."

Anger disfigured her countenance; in a soured, sharpened voice, she protested:

"Mr. Gifford, this is a breach of contract. Mine was to play leading business, and I claim the right to appear in the part for which you specially engaged me. It cannot be withdrawn without a violation of the agreement."

"Pardon me. You, on your side, undertook to attend the necessary rehearsals."

"How can I attend," exclaimed Annie appealingly, "whilst laid on a bed of sickness?"

"Your illness, however severe, did not deter you from enjoying a cruise on Lord Harry Fopstone's 'Pirouette,' when you should have been here, nor from playing cards with your party till three in the morning," returned Mr. Gifford, who had been careful to verify these facts through friends at the Métropole.

Foiled, she still rebelled against the sense of defeat, and demanded half-threateningly, half-incredulously:

"Do I understand, then, that you refuse to let me resume my part?"

They signified that such, in the main, was their meaning.

She burst into tears, and fainted away in the arms of James Romney and Beattie Graves, who stood opportunely within reach. I looked remorsefully at Miss Hope, who smiled, and shook her head inexorably.

"My dear, it's her last card; she keeps it for emergencies, but she's lost the trick," was her whispered aside. "Let the gentlemen attend to her. You go and dress."

When I returned, Annie had vanished. The rehearsal was gone through with; but the nerves of all had been disagreeably shaken by the fray. Miss Hope, in particular, seemed moody and anxious. Annie had provoked a fresh passage of arms before leaving, and gone off, vowing vengeance, said James Romney playfully.

"She means mischief, though," muttered Miss Hope, seriously.

"What mischief?" I wondered. Mr. Gifford rejoined carelessly:

"First she can get her Métropole friends to take a box, laugh, cough, or sneeze inopportunately, and make fun of us in the papers."

"Aye," said Charlotte, "she'll do her worst; but if that's all, we're strong enough to fight her, I think."

Of course I should come in for a share of her spite; but I felt safe, as in mail armour, from its shafts; safe in my conscience, innocent of desire to supplant her; safe in the lowliness of my professional ambition, and safe, trebly safe, in the shadowy

personal happiness that encompassed me like a golden cloud. Small chance had James Romney and I had of exchanging a word or a thought during those last busy days of hard professional servitude. But at least we were slaving together; and a sweet fancy stole in, telling me that, should I acquit myself successfully, my position would be bettered, and the social gap lessened, if ever so little, between Elizabeth Adams and the third son of Sherwood Romney, Esquire, of The Mote, Hampshire.

Saturday morning came. We were finishing a hurried lunch when the letters were brought in. All but one were for Miss Hope, who had already left the table to answer a telegram just received. The one other letter was for Mr. Romney and seemed unexpected. He pored over it perplexedly, but deeply engrossed. Thinking Miss Hope's correspondence might be pressing, I took it upstairs to her room, where I now heard her walking disturbedly up and down. As I entered, she turned to me a countenance livid with suppressed excitement, brows contracted, eyes sunken, face of a ghastly hue.

"Gracious heavens!—what has happened?" I gasped out in consternation.

She began to laugh at my dismay, but her laugh jarred and broke.

"I haven't drunk poison," she said in a strained voice. "You needn't ring."

"You look like it," I said gravely. "What is it? Tell me."

"I'm run into a corner, Liz." She had dropped into a chair, her fingers clutching the bars as if they would break them. "Is it her doing, the little viper?" she continued fiercely. "If I thought so, I could twist her neck for her with pleasure, and save the world a lot of mischief."

It was only a figure of speech, of course, but her accent and gesture sent a cold thrill through me. I thought I should dream of them at night.

"Annie?" I faltered fearfully.

"She vowed to stop the performance. I thought there was not time, but it's done. I'm threatened with—with what means sheer ruin to me, to you, and the business in hand."

"Money?" I let fall under my breath.

"Want of money," she returned. "No need to go into the old story. Last week came a threat. I put them off and thought I was safe until Monday, but a friend's sent me warning. They're down on me, the kites! The scenery, properties, dresses here are all held in my name. These, and the receipts with which we pay salaries to-night, they can seize on them all. That's enough for you to know."

"Won't they listen to reason?" I asked.

"Not this time. That's where I trace her hand in it," she said gloomily.

"How much is wanted?"

"Five hundred, to stave it off for to-night. By Monday all may be straight yet awhile. If the 'Greenwood Tree' is a success, that means fresh credit, and ready money to satisfy the most clamorous. But they'll take no warrant for that beforehand. Perhaps they think I can pay, and hope to force me by this move. But I can't; I haven't five pounds I can put my hand on to call my own, and only an hour or two for contriving some means of escape."

"Does Mr. Gifford know?" I asked. "Can he help?"

"He mustn't know," she said violently; "and he can't help."

"Mr. Danvers," I suggested, clearly but echoing her unspoken thought.

"It's Danvers or nothing," she muttered to herself.

"Go to him and explain."

"I daren't leave the house. It might precipitate their action if they thought I suspected, and I'm due on the stage at this moment, to supervise what's going on."

"Write."

She snatched up a pen, dashed off a few lines, tore them up, and shook her head in bewildered despair.

"I can't," and she leant back, helpless and wretched. "How to make him understand? The words won't come. And if the letter didn't reach him at once it might be too late."

I had never seen her so overcome. Her agitation carried you away like a leaf in a storm.

"I'll go," I said boldly. "I'll find him and come back and tell you."

"You?"

"Yes. What you've told me I can explain better than could be done in writing. Give me a line to say I come as your messenger, that's all."

"Upon my word, not a bad notion," she said hastily. "If you fail I'm only where I am now; but you must succeed. Liz, hear me, you *must*!"

She wrote off the note in a second, handed it me, and I was gone from her presence.

It was like coming indoors out of a hurricane; but her excitement, her eager determination had caught me. I snatched cloak and bonnet and sped out of the inn unnoticed, never considering in my zeal what a delicate mission I had volunteered to undertake, whilst knowing nothing of the particulars of the matter. I would have faced a den of lions; I should fearlessly have entered the colonnade of the Lees and rung up the three footmen, reckless of their amazement at this incursion. But as I opened the gate of the pleasure-ground I heard Mr. Danvers' voice giving orders to his gardener in the rose plantation hard by.

Ought I to see him or not? Society was a strange land to me,

and my etiquette book was at fault ; but, hearing the gate click, and perceiving his visitor was a lady, he hustled forward to meet her, and recognized me at once, which was more than I had depended on.

"Miss Adams, I declare ! Why, good afternoon ; this is a most unexpected surprise—I mean pleasure," he stammered embarrassed.

I, likewise embarrassed, stammered back that I brought a message from Miss Hope ; that I begged him to forgive my intrusion, she had no one else to send, and the matter was pressing.

"Dear me, how you're out of breath !" he exclaimed ; "there's a bench close by in the plantation. Come and let us hear what Queen Charlotte has to say," and he led me into an elaborately planned rustic belvedere. "Sit down, sit down," he said blandly.

Down I sat, and paused to recover my breath.

"See what an outlook we have here," he began. "Observe the complete view of the bay," and he proceeded to point out the headlands in order and name them, seemingly in no hurry to open the letter in his hand.

"Very well chosen spot," I returned. "Miss Hope's note will explain how, forcibly detained by business, she sent me to you on an errand that concerns our performance to-night."

"Delighted to see Miss Hope's messenger," he rejoined gallantly. "I was just superintending the pruning of that Gloria rose—do you see?—the first grown in this country."

"I am afraid I disturbed you. I will not detain you longer than to deliver Miss Hope's request."

"Wants a box for a friend, I suppose. We'll see to it by-and-by ; but first you must rest, you must rest ; you've been walking in the sun," and he absently broke open the envelope. "Very nicely you played Celia the other night ; very nicely indeed."

"Did I ?" said I, abstractedly. "I am glad that you—that people thought so."

"Yes," he assured me, "people in general, and I in particular."

Now this was perplexing. He wouldn't keep to the point, or even let me get there. If I were too brusque and persistent, he might turn crusty and refuse to oblige, and he seemed in such a shining good-humour as, if only it lasted, would refuse nothing. He chatted on pleasantly, made me take note of his rare flowers and shrubs, I listening and responding submissively, but the first chance I got I plumped down on my errand.

"I bring bad news from Miss Hope," I said. "She is in a serious difficulty."

Far from seeming concerned, he laughed, amused, but indifferent.

"Of course, of course, she always is. Whenever was Charlotte Hope not in difficulties ? But they can't be serious this time. I helped her on land when you came in July. She's had no time to get into the breakers again. Don't tell me !"

This was a poser, for which she had not prepared me.

"Serious they are," I rejoined, "or she would not be troubling you now."

"Ah, well, she's too extravagant," he opined comfortably; "she must pull in. Writs out again, eh? Bailiffs in her London house; that's the word. Well, if they must come in, they must. Depend on it, it's high time; they've given her law long enough."

I saw diplomacy was required, and resumed:

"It is not merely her private well-being that is involved, but her duty to the public, to her fellow-actors, to you, sir, who have so generously interested yourself in this enterprise."

He looked up, with a quaint mixture of *bonhomie* and defiance. "Well?"

"By an unforeseen and really monstrous proceeding, the outrageous vindictiveness of some frantic creditor, she is threatened with an immediate seizure of her theatrical property here; a measure that will force the closing of the theatre, and cause a terrible scandal. She is nearly out of her mind with the trouble of it."

The little bullet-headed old man looked at me with twinkling eyes.

"Ah, my dear Miss Adams, you're young, and easily worked upon. Her spirited imagination runs away with her. Don't let it run away with you."

"She has been warned," I urged. "Her creditors have the power to stop the performance. She thinks they will use it."

"Stop the performance? Kill the goose with the golden eggs? You've not lived so long in the world as I have, Miss Adams, or you'd know better. They want their money; they make this threat to force her to raise it; she puts forward this threat to induce some charitable person to supply it, but as to the threat being executed—pooh!" and he took a pinch of snuff.

"Mr. Danvers," I said desperately, "there are wheels within wheels. Miss Hope has enemies, and every reason to fear they will do out of malice what they would not from any other motive."

Though pretty well persuaded of Annie's share in the matter, I dared not be more explicit.

"Enemies! that's another delusion of hers," he put in.

"For her, all depends on staving it off for to-night."

"And what will 'staving it off' cost this time?" he asked.

"A loan of five hundred pounds till Monday," I said, as lightly as I conscientiously could.

He bridled up, tapped the ground with his foot and pounded his knee with his fist, in impatience.

"Bless my soul! Five hundred—a mere trifle, of course, to a Cræsus like me. Just like her. Fling her a million, it vanishes

like glass-bowls and bird-cages in a conjuror's hat. No, no, my dear Miss Hope," thus he apostrophized the absent petitioner, "I've the greatest regard for you personally, the highest admiration for your acting powers, but where money's in the case—why, if you'd my whole fortune to-day, you'd run through it in a year, and be just where you are at this present moment."

He had hardened his heart, and went on convincingly to himself:

"She comes down here, brilliant season, large receipts; these fellows hear of it—they have been kept out of their own long enough, and must use what means they can to get it. I think your fears for to-night are unfounded. For the rest, Miss Hope must face her embarrassments in the end, and there is no kindness in delaying the inevitable crash."

"Sir," I pleaded, "the case is peculiar. A large sum has had to be spent upon the piece—properties, dresses, scenery—all before a penny of the receipts can be appropriated by herself. The house is bought out, a collapse—even a postponement would cause irretrievable loss. Granting her imprudence is to blame for the danger, the catastrophe would be a terrible misfortune, for her, for Mr. Gifford, for all concerned in the piece. And this danger you have it in your power to avert," my voice trembled, for I was disappointed by his obduracy.

He took more snuff, then asked playfully, as you speak to a pet child or a pussy-cat:

"Have we a part in the piece, or haven't we?"

"Yes, sir, the part that Miss Torrens—resigned."

"Aha!" and he laughed good-humouredly. "So it's this little girl's chance too? Makes her eloquent, and no wonder!"

In sober truth, I had forgotten myself in my distress for Miss Hope, who looked as if she might go mad, or jump into the sea, as soon as eat her breakfast. But now he reminded me of my chance and all I built on it, I knew it would go to my heart to lose it.

"Sir, I should be sorry to see it fall through. I should be the loser, by a chance—though the chance may only be one of showing my incompetence. But we have worked hard at the play, and set our hearts on its success. Of its merits I am no judge, but I think Miss Hope's acting would carry it through, if it had none. Only it takes very little to turn the scale in a theatrical venture, and throw a damper over the whole."

"What a persuasive little advocate you are," he said laughingly; "still, I am convinced Miss Hope exaggerates or invents the danger, unconsciously attracted by hopes of getting a fresh lift."

There was no more to be said; I rose, owning despondingly that I had failed in my errand.

"Well, sir, since you are not willing, I must go back and tell her so. She may have thought of some other friend to apply to."

"Don't go, don't go," he said hastily, making me sit down again. "Now I daresay you think me an old curmudgeon because I don't at once sign a blank cheque for her on my bankers. If you knew how a man like me gets sponged upon from all quarters. The more you give, the more you're supposed to have left to give, and that's not logical."

"Your generosity is well known, sir, and no doubt is often abused," I said mournfully. "Perhaps it would hardly repay you to know that you have averted this great dread, which is unnerving her at a critical moment, and conferred an immense favour on her and every one connected with the play."

"Including yourself, I hope," said he.

"Myself—oh, yes," said I, abashed by such politeness from high quarters.

"Well, well, we'll see about it by-and-by. Five hundred till Monday, is that it? And for the security I must take your word—eh, Miss Adams?" and he laughed, much amused.

Overjoyed that he had made up his mind to yield, I could be patient now, listen, and answer him as gaily as he liked.

"But don't let it get known," he stipulated. "This must remain between you and me and her ladyship—honour bright! I know of three bankrupt managers who'd be down on me to-morrow like cormorants if they heard. Mum's the word, remember."

I promised solemnly for myself and Miss Hope, who would be the last to wish to break counsel.

"Well, well, that's settled. No thanks, no thanks. You shan't go without the cheque, nor without a cup of tea. They shall bring it to us out here."

So I stayed, and he wrote out the cheque in the summer-house; then the tea was brought, and with it a visiting card—the name on which I did not see. He nodded, and said to his servant, "Ask him to wait; I'll be with him presently." I snatched the excuse for departing the instant I had swallowed my tea. He insisted on escorting me to the park entrance, showing me as much attention as if I been a person of consequence.

I made but one bound from his gates to the door of the Swan. Miss Hope met me in the passage, and whirled me, breathless, up to her room.

"They can't stop it now," I said exultant. "Here's the money."

Her face bespoke a relief as profound as her previous despondency; but this shock did not unnerve her. She was herself again in an instant.

"Salvation!" she cried devoutly. "Bless you, child, for the best girl I ever had to do with!"

There was no time for questions. I left her, glad of a minute's breathing-space to summon courage for the night's ordeal; but I

found that, like death, to dwell on it drove your fancy to exaggerate its terrors.

Mr. Romney came in late for our five-o'clock dinner. He was as silent and abstracted as the rest were talkative and alert. The meal ended, he and I lingered in the room when the party dispersed. He stood by the mantelpiece, warming his hands seemingly over the gilt shavings that filled the grate. Suddenly perceiving my gaze fixed upon him in wonder, he started from his reverie, and I could not help asking what he had on his mind. His face cleared, his lips relaxed. As if not unwilling to break his reserve, he confessed, with quaint and confidential gravity :

"The fact is, Miss Adams, I'm placed like the donkey——"

"Donkey!" I repeated puzzled.

"Between the two bundles of hay. I heard to-day from my governor."

My spirits, at these words, sank of a sudden. A wall seemed to have risen between us. He went on to explain that all this while he had kept up a secret correspondence with the most good-natured of his sisters. Whether Mr. Sherwood Romney had got wind of his son's recent exploits, did not appear; but authority had relented, and offered terms. Briefly, if J. R. would return to his sorrowing family, all should be forgiven, he should have his own way and his army commission. For these were the days—the very last days—of purchase.

"What do you think I'd better do?" he said thoughtfully.

"Please ask some one else, Mr. Romney."

"I have. My adviser says, 'Go home, by all means.' What do you say?"

I hesitated, then owned I had hoped he would stay on with us. Why exchange the peaceful, harmless calling of an actor for the bloodthirsty profession of arms?

He laughed, pleaded a nation's right, necessity for self-defence.

"Aren't we an island?" I represented. "And then it isn't a sailor you're going to be."

"Oh, you don't understand," he said, with manly superiority.

So much I understood, that he had a fancy for a soldier's calling, an idea that there, sooner than in pulpit or brewery, he might acquit himself well. What hold could stage life have upon him after all?

"Have you consulted Miss Hope?" I asked.

"No, for I know just what she'll say, what everybody says, 'Be off to-morrow.'"

"Then you don't want to desert—to—be off to-morrow?" I said.

"I don't know how I shall ever make up my mind to," he began impetuously—stopped, then let fall emphatically and low, "to leave you, Miss Adams."

I dare assert that was the happiest moment of my life. Who says the world is a sad and a bad world? If people are wretched there it must, I could have sworn, be through some fault of their own.

One enchanted moment. The next the spell was broken; we were called for, scolded for idling when we should be making ourselves useful. Fifty jobs still undone; and it wanted but two hours to the tug of war.

(To be continued.)

THE LONDON OF HOGARTH.

IT has been observed that since the writing of "Tom Jones" or "Amelia," no one has ventured so faithfully to depict a *man*. What was said of Fielding is no less applicable to his contemporary: the painter of the Harlot's Progress, and a Marriage à la Mode. More solicitous to point his moral than to adorn his tale, Hogarth often employs episodes and accessories which an outwardly more decent age regards with disgust. These blemishes overlooked, his pictures are invaluable for their completeness and truth* to him who would study the domestic history, the manners, nay, the very costume of the time. They possess, too, an additional value—less considered than it deserves—as faithful presentments, in almost every particular, of the town wherein his busy, all-observant life was passed.

Let us take for instance the Hogarths which will probably be better remembered by our readers—those that were lately exhibited at Burlington House. One illustrates Southwark Fair—known to many, misled perhaps by Walpole, as Bartholomew Fair—lent by the Duke of Newcastle's trustees. Two others (to which we shall refer in their places) belong to a set of four that Hogarth painted for a room at the Spring Gardens, Vauxhall, whereof his friend Tyers was proprietor. The painter was then lodging in South Lambeth, having just made a runaway match with Jane, daughter to Sir James Thornhill (1730). In the *London Post* of January 23, 1738, are advertised proposals for publishing that series, together with a print of his Strolling Actresses. This latter composition, which one Mr. Wood, of Littleton, bought for 26 guineas, formed, in Walpole's opinion, his best work for wit and imagination without any ulterior end. W. Austin Dobson, in his *Life of Hogarth*, says, that the real Southwark Fair was consumed by fire in 1807. But in a letter printed in the *Times* of 8th January last year, Mr. George Scharf demonstrates that the painting exhibited at Burlington House is the original work as rescued from the fire at Mr. Johnes's house at Hafod. In Mr. Stevens' catalogue of prints and drawings at the British Museum (Div. I. Political and Personal Satires), it is stated that the church tower in the middle distance is that of Newington. We think this is wrong: the fair was celebrated on

* The last scene of the Harlot's Progress must be excepted: in this, indeed, Hogarth departs from *raisemblance*.

St. Margaret's Hill, in the Borough; the booths, stalls and shows extended some little distance further southwards; so that the tower whence Kidman flies down a rope prone to the ground, is meant for that of (old) St. George's Church, at the foot of the now Borough High Street. The fine-looking girl with a drum is drawn from one whom Hogarth once protected here from a ruffianly assault. This picture alone is a day's study for the numerous allusions it contains to the theatrical and other topics of the day.

Of the entrance gate of old Burlington House itself, Hogarth drew two plates: the *Masquerades and Operas* (1725), and the *Man of Taste* (1732). In both of these Kent, the architect, as over-rated by Lord Burlington, is placed upon the top of the gateway, with Michael Angelo and Raffaele on the pediment beneath—the relative positions of these two, be it noted, are reversed in the prints. In the earlier print the crowds that rush to one of Heidegger's masquerades, and the pantomime of Dr. Faustus, leave Lord Burlington with Colin Campbell and a groom, remote and solitary before the gate. For this Campbell is claimed the design of the famous colonnade and doorway, which for some years have been suffered to lie in neglect and decay at Battersea Park. Thornhill is said to have inspired the work in revenge for the preference of Kent over himself to decorate Kensington Palace. The print of 1732 arises from Pope's satire upon his patron, the Duke of Chandos, under the guise of Timon in his poem on *False Taste*. While busy in whitewashing the gateway, Pope bespatters the duke's coach as it is drawn past the scaffolding. The poet did not venture to retaliate in verse upon so formidable a foe; yet good grounds exist for believing that he designed to prosecute the author of this now highly prized performance.

Covent Garden market-place forms the scenes of Hogarth's *Morning* and his satirical print of *Rich's Glory*. The latter is taken from the return of Inigo Jones's great or northern piazza, near to the doorway of Tom's coffee-house on the northern side of Russell Street. Rich had opened his theatre here in 1732, under a patent granted to the Duke's Company, as it still continued to be styled. He is seen riding with his mistress in a triumphal car at the head of a motley procession of authors, players and pantomimists, with stage properties collected from the old house in Portugal Row, Lincoln's Inn Fields. Gay is mounted on a stout porter's shoulder; Pope, in a dark corner, unequivocally demonstrates his contempt for the "*Beggar's Opera*" and the whole proceeding. In the middle of the square, as yet free from the later encroachments, stands the pillar with its dial and sphere.* Southwards is seen Tavistock Row, occupying the site of the garden wall of Bedford House, town mansion of William first Duke of Bedford, which was demolished at the beginning of last century (1704). Along the row are

* The now market house replaced an earlier structure some sixty-five years since.

ranged the fruiterers' wooden sheds and stalls, but already have the trees disappeared. In the distance rises the portico of Inigo Jones's parish church of St. Paul, as restored by the Earl of Burlington.* At King Street corner stands the Swan Tavern, also distinguished in Hogarth's *Morning* by a jug set out upon a post. The same token of a jug and post is reproduced in its companion pictures, *Noon* and *Night*. This print of Rich's *Glory* was sold for sixpence a copy, but its sale was speedily suppressed. In *Morning*, exhibited at Burlington House, we have a fair prospect of the north-western angle of the square. But here, as is often the case with Hogarth's works, the print reverses the view, a circumstance to be borne in mind by all who consult them for their topographical features. The season is winter, the hour five minutes to eight in the morning. St. Paul's Church and Lord Orford's mansion constitute prominent objects in the background. Tom King's coffee-house, commemorated by Fielding, and once, as Murphy happily observed, well known to all gentlemen to whom beds are unknown, is placed where the hustings for the Westminster elections used to be erected. But here our artist achieves an effect at the sacrifice of accuracy, for King's station was opposite to Tavistock Row in the line of booths. His widow Moll carried on the somewhat notorious business profitably enough to retire with her savings.† She built three cottages near to that occupied by Richard Steele, at the foot of Haverstock Hill. Moll King's Row is faintly visible in the distance of Hogarth's "*March of the Guards to Finchley*." One of the cottages was the last home of Nancy Dawson, the hornpipe dancer, who, dying there, May 27, 1767, rests in the burial ground (behind the Foundling Hospital) of St. George's, Bloomsbury. That graveyard is confounded by Peter Cunningham, and by all who follow unquestioning in his track, with the burial ground of St. George the Martyr, in Queen Square. The stone, broken and defaced, was lately removed. The writer has been shown its site by one who remembers all that remained of the inscription, "Here lies Nancy Dawson." A Drury Lane play-bill for the "*Beggar's Opera*," September 23, 1760, announces—"In Act III. hornpipe by Miss Dawson; her first appearance here." The stage direction is, Scene 2—dance of prisoners in fetters. A resident of Vincent Square, S.W., possesses, or did possess, a portrait of Moll King, reputedly by Hogarth, showing a bold-faced brunette with a cat in her lap. Lord Orford's house is what the present generation will remember, together with its glees and theatrical portraits, as Evans's, or Paddy Green's. During the last fifteen years the premises have been used in

* See *ad hoc* the *Weekly Journal* for April 22, 1727, and compare with T. Bowles's print of 1751. The railings were cleared away from the portico in 1879.

† See the notice in the *Weekly Register* for June 9, 1739, of her conviction for keeping a disorderly house.

succession by the Vauxhall, and its successor, the Falstaff Club. They are now in occupation by the New Club. The original house could boast of many celebrated inhabitants, amongst them Sir Kenelm Digby, who practised in his laboratory here, and Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham. It appears that in the worthy prelate's days a gratuitous custom obtained of laying all the parish foundlings on the doorstep. The house was rebuilt for Edward Russell, grandson to Francis fourth Earl of Bedford, who, for his famous victory over the French fleet off Cape La Hogue, was elevated Earl of Orford, May 7, 1697. The Dutch façade, since modified, was intended to resemble the stern of a man-of-war; a considerable amount of ship's timber was used for the flooring and staircases. Having been occupied in turn by Lord Archer of Umberslade and James West, P.R.S., the noted bibliographer, it was opened in 1774 by one David Lowe as a family hotel—the first of its kind in London. Next, adjoining to Lord Orford's, we see the home of William, brother to John, Hunter, "the famous anatomist of Covent Garden," for whom Fielding sent when about to sail for Lisbon. That house subsequently became Richardson's hotel. We may add that the central figure of this highly interesting picture is a clever rendering of Dryden's victim to "the agonies of unaccomplished love." She is said to represent an aunt of the painter, who was at first pleased enough with the likeness, but, on being informed of its untoward significance, deprived him of a good legacy for his pains. Some lay the gambling scene in *The Rake's Progress* (No. VI.) in Covent Garden, others at White's, in St. James's Street, where a fire, shown faintly in the picture, broke out on May 3, 1733. In that fire was destroyed a greater part of Sir Andrew Fountaine's collection of miniatures, bronzes, and enamels. Rakewell himself is arrested in St. James's Street, whilst being carried in his chair to Queen Caroline's Drawing-room on St. David's Day. The painting is deficient in conception and composition; still it affords a good perspective of the eastern side of the street (*western* side in the print) with the palace gateway at the end. No. V. of this same series (1735) exhibits the interior of old Marylebone parish church, on the site of the now parish chapel in High Street, which was rebuilt in 1741. That church was then sufficiently remote from the town for the purposes of a private marriage. In the churchyard, opposite to the vestry door, are the identical altar-tomb and head-stone by which Tom Idle gambled on Sunday morning (*Industry and Idleness*); and there was buried, 1734, Figg, the prizefighter and backsworser—who is introduced into the *Levée* scene—No. II. *Rake's Progress*—and is shown mounted on his horse in Southwark Fair.

The graphic pens of Fielding and Harrison Ainsworth have familiarised us with the vicious life of a quarter wherein Hogarth

found many an apt subject for his pencil. In St. Giles's-in-the-Fields he places his supposititious Gin Lane (1751), distinguished by the distant steeple of Hawksmoor's St. George's, Bloomsbury; a St. Giles's parish school-boy figures as Tom Nero in the Four Stages of Cruelty (1751), one scene of which, by-the-way, is laid in Thavie's Inn. At the Rose Tavern in Drury lane is celebrated the supper delineated in the Rake's Progress (No. III.), as is evident from the name on the salver which old Leather-coat, his actual likeness, is bringing into the room for the posture-girl's performance thereon; Sir John Gonson arrests Kate Hackabout at a brothel in that same thoroughfare—see the name on the beer pot—(Harlot's Progress, No. III.); from a bagnio in Soho Counsellor Silvertongue effects his escape (No. V., Marriage à la Mode). In Soho, too, Hogarth places his Beer Street (1751); as also Noon, one of the Four Times of the Day. That view is fictitious, this is changed almost beyond recognition. In Noon a party of French *émigrés* are leaving church at 11.30 a.m. It is the Greek Church on the western side of the then Hog Lane; the first of its kind that was established in London (1677). The Huguenots bought the church, re-dedicating it to St. Mary. A chancel and a northern aisle were added to St. Mary's about twelve years ago; the original inscription remains over the western door. In 1762 Hog Lane was renamed Crown Street, perhaps from the sign, not infrequent in this quarter, of the celebrated "Rose and Crown" at Rose Street corner. Of old St. Martin's Lane may be found a perspective in the Enraged Musician (1741); the house at whose window Castrucci appears, violin and bow in hand, being that of Hogarth's acquaintance John Huggins, who preceded the infamous Bamberidge as warden of the Fleet. No. III. of the Marriage à la Mode (1745) shows Misaubin's consulting room—with portraits of the quack and his Irish wife, the latter, it is said, copied from the notorious Betty Careless—a large apartment in what afterwards became Powell's well known oil and colour shop in St. Martin's Lane. Misaubin and "Spot" Ward figure as the rival doctors in the death scene of the Harlot's Progress. Hogarth then lived at the "Golden Head" in Leicester Fields, now the site of the Archbishop Tenison's school at the south-eastern corner of Leicester square. The Society of Arts have marked the school with a commemorative tablet, but give no indication that the house was rebuilt, since the time when Hogarth made a head of Van Dyke out of cork and set it over his street door.

In early life Hogarth lodged on London Bridge. The bridge and its houses are seen through the open window of the citizen's room in the final episode of his most popular work—the Marriage à la Mode, preserved in the national collection at Trafalgar Square. Other portions of the City will be found in the Burning of the Rumps at Temple Bar, in No. I. of the Harlot's Progress, being

the inn yard of the old "Bell" in Wood street, and in the betrayal and arrest of Tom Idle at a night-cellar in Blood Bowl Alley, Water Lane, now Whitefriars Street. Nor should we omit to mention the views of Cheapside and St. Paul's Churchyard from Blowbladder Street, in Industry and Idleness; of "Dolly Mill," as the enforced labour gallery at Bridewell was vulgarly termed (*Harlot's Progress*, No. IV.); and Monument Yard, with a well-nigh impossible view of St. Paul's in the distance, in the *South Sea Bubble* (1721).

The space at our disposal being limited we must be content with enumerating some only of the remaining plates and pictures. Hogarth has drawn Tyburn with its gallows, Cuckold's Point on the Thames, Henley's Oratory in Clare Market, Rosamond's Pond in St. James's Park, and Winchester House, Chelsea. Of inns and taverns may be cited the "King's Head," and the "Adam and Eve," by the turnpike which separated Hampstead and Tottenham Court roads—*vide* *The March to Finchley* (1750); the "Rummer" at the northern end of Whitehall, in *Night*; the "Sir Hugh Myddelton," Sadler's Wells, in *Evening*—these last two belonging to the *Four Times of The Day*; the "Golden Eagle" (Calfs' Head Club), Suffolk Street, Pall Mall, and, as we believe, the Angel Inn yard, Clerkenwell, in the *Stage Coach* (1747). In No. II. of the *Marriage à la Mode*, we see an interior taken from Walpole's house in Arlington Street. Of the *Rake's Progress*, No. VII. depicts the interior of a common room in Fleet Prison, and No. VIII. a ward in Bethlehem Hospital, Moorfields, in an age when its unfortunate inmates were allowed to become a public show. John Taylor, author of "*Monsieur Tonson*," says in his "*Records of My Life*": "Strange to say, the place which they [his parents] chose for their courtship was Bedlam, where, at that time, to the disgrace of the Metropolis, casual visitors were admitted for a penny each."

W. E. MILLIKEN.

PEPPERPOT'S LITTLE PETS!

COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

By JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Author of "Box & Cox," &c., &c.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JACK PEPPERPOT, late H.M. 147th Foot.

DOCTOR JACOBUS JOGTROT.

MR. CHRISTOPHER CHIRPER.

STEPHEN BLUNT.

MRS. TARLETAN.

JESSIE (*her Niece*).

MARTHA (*a Servant*).

SCENE.—Mrs. Tarletan's Villa at Hampstead.

SCENE.—*Elegantly furnished room at Mrs. Tarletan's villa. French windows at back showing garden beyond; doors R. R. 3 E. and L.; fireplace at L. H. 2 E.; table, chairs, sofa, &c. MARTHA discovered arranging furniture, &c. (bell heard without).*

MARTHA. There's the gate bell beginning. Butcher for orders, I suppose (*bell heard again*). I thought so; he's the most impatient young man I ever came across! Asked me if I'd marry him only yesterday morning when he called for orders, and was quite saucy because I hadn't made up my mind when he brought the meat! I must go and ask missus (*exit door R.* JACK PEPPERPOT *is seen to cross at back beyond the French windows; looks cautiously in at C.*)

JACK. No one to be seen; so much the better (*calling off*). Now then, Blunt, come along! take care how you turn the corner; that'll do (*enters at C. walking backwards, closely followed by STEPHEN BLUNT, in an undress military jacket and cap, carrying a box covered with Chinese characters*). Left wheel! halt (*takes box carefully from BLUNT and places it on small table—opens lid*). Nothing broken, I hope. No! I don't even see a chip!

BLUNT. That's a wonder too, your honour! cups and saucers is rather a delicate sort of cargo to bring all the way from China.

JACK (*looking at watch*). Nine o'clock! I wonder if my dear, excellent old aunt is still indulging in a horizontal position? We reached town so late last night, I was afraid to disturb the dear old soul (*looking round him*). Blunt, it strikes me we shall find our quarters here very comfortable—eh? (*falling into chair and stretching out his legs*).

BLUNT. I think so too, your honour (*imitating JACK, then jumping up again and saluting*). Beg pardon, your honour! but when you say *our* quarters——"

JACK. I *mean* our quarters! You wouldn't think of leaving me, you brute, would you? Haven't we spent the last ten years of our lives together—more or less respectably?—and if I have got back to Old England again, sound in wind and limb, who have I to thank? who but you, you fine faithful old dog you! (*laying his hand on BLUNT'S shoulder*).

BLUNT (*deprecatingly*). Oh! oh!

JACK. If you forget a certain sabre cut I received in the Soudan, I don't.

BLUNT. Oh! oh! just a little bit of a scratch.

JACK. Exactly; a little bit of a scratch that began at the top of my head, and finished at the tip of my nose! I was lying on his way through the Arabs at the risk of his life, the idiot, my back faint and sick, when a noble, lion-hearted fellow cut threw me across his horse, and saved me! That noble lion-hearted idiot was Stephen Blunt—bless him! But enough of the past! by-the-bye, Blunt, as long as you are stationed here you must make it a point of finding everybody and everything about you charming, delightful, in short, first chop!

BLUNT (*touching his cap*). All right, your honour!

MRS. TARLETAN (*heard without*). If I am wanted, Martha, you'll find me in the garden.

JACK. Here comes my aunt; beat a retreat—quick, anywhere.

BLUNT *hurries out at L. H.*

Enter MRS. TARLETAN at R.

MRS. T. (*seeing JACK*). A stranger?

JACK (*smiling*). Not quite, (*going to her*). Don't you know me, Aunt?

MRS. T. Eh? (*suddenly*). Jack dear, dear boy! (*JACK clasps her in his arms*). Kiss me again, Jack.

JACK. Again and again till you tell me to leave off (*kissing her again*).

MRS. T. Let me look at you (*holding his head between her hands*). It is ten long years since I have seen you, my darling boy: and has it come back from China? a dear!

JACK. It has! all the way!

MRS. T. (*pulling his cheek affectionately*). And is it glad to get home?

JACK. Is it? *ain't* it? Ah! after knocking about the world for ten years, you don't know how happy a fellow feels in getting back to his aunt, and having his cheeks pulled about. By-the-bye, Aunt, what d'ye think?—what with my prize money, the sale of my commission, and one thing and the other, I find I've managed to scrape together a matter of £10,000.

MRS. T. Ten thousand? that's a large sum of money, my dear.

JACK. An awful lot, isn't it? the puzzle is, what I'm to do with it.

MRS. T. My advice is, invest in land; they say "Stick to the land, and the land will stick to you."

JACK. I know *mud* will—at least it did in the Soudan.

MRS. T. My dear Jack, do be serious! Now that you are worth £500 a year——

JACK. Five hundred a year! I shall never spend the half of it.

MRS. T. Then get a *wife* to help you.

JACK. A wife! me? what for?—why, my dear Aunt, here are no end of clever people complaining of the over-population of the country and you want me to——(*shaking his head*). No! No!

MRS. T. Well, well, we'll say no more about it; though it's a pity—a great pity!

JACK. A pity! what do you mean?

MRS. T. Nothing! a fancy, a dream of mine—that's all.

(JESSIE is heard singing a snatch of a song without—runs in from R. H.)

JESSIE (*running to MRS. TARLETAN and kissing her*). Good morning, Aunt dear (*suddenly seeing JACK*). A stranger! really, sir—I—I——(*courtesying*).

JACK (*bowing to JESSIE*). So do I, I'm sure, Miss! very much indeed.

MRS. T. (*smiling*). "Sir"? "Miss"? Why, Jack, have you forgotten Jessie?

JACK. Eh? what? little Jessie!

JESSIE. Cousin Jack!

JACK (*taking both JESSIE's hands*). Dear, dear, when I remember what a tiny little mite you were ten years ago! about so high! (*measuring about a foot*). Why, I used to teach your A B C, didn't I?—and now I suppose you're quite an accomplished young lady?

JESSIE. Tolerably so, I hope, Cousin.

JACK. Then you deserve a prize, and here it is (*opening box on table—takes out a fan and presents it to JESSIE*). The reward of merit!

JESSIE. Oh, what a beautiful Chinese fan! Oh, thank you, Cousin!

JACK. And perhaps our good aunt will give us our tea to-night out of her new porcelain service (*showing contents of box*).

MRS. T. A present for me too! so you found time to think of me, dear boy?

JACK. Think of you! Do you remember this? (*taking small case from his breast pocket and opening it*).

MRS. T. My photograph?

JACK. Which you gave me the night before I left England. You've never left me! You've shared all my hardships, all my dangers, all my triumphs! Didn't we enter Cabul together, sword in hand?

MRS. T. (*smiling*). I enter Cabul!

JACK. Yes; rolled up in three of my flannel waistcoats to protect you.

JESSIE. Oh, Cousin Jack, I do so long to hear all your adventures.

JACK. Then you shall have them; not all at once; mustn't be greedy, little girl. Now for it (*they seat themselves*). Ahem! (*in an impressive tone*). In order to make a first-rate brick—

MRS. T. and JESSIE. A brick?

JACK. Don't interrupt me! I repeat, in order to make a first-rate brick, they put it on the kiln and bake it. Well, in order to make a first-rate soldier, they send him to India, and bake *him*—that was my case.

MRS. T. Well, from India you went to the Soudan?

JACK. Yes; and then back to China.

JESSIE. Poor Cousin! how you must have suffered in your campaigns!

JACK. Tolerably; but we ate well, when we'd got anything to eat, and slept well when we hadn't to keep awake.

JESSIE. And you were never wounded?

JACK. Nothing to speak of. I got rather a warm one at Abu Klea, but luckily it was on the head.

JESSIE. Cousin Jack, I really feel quite proud of you! that I do.

JACK. Then allow me to thank you in the name of the British Army; allow the British Army to salute you! (*Kisses her*—JESSIE joins MRS. TARLETAN, who has gone a few steps up the st. ge.)

JACK (*looking after JESSIE and aside*). A remarkably nice little body. If ever I *should* marry, I really—

JESSIE (*to MRS. TARLETAN as they come forward*). No, indeed, Aunt, there's no necessity for anything of the kind.

MRS. T. I beg your pardon, my dear, Jack is one of the family.

JACK. Of course I am! what's the matter?

MRS. T. Well, the fact is, we are not unlikely soon to find a husband for Jessie!

JACK. A husband? Who is he? What is he?

MRS. T. I only know that he is a *protégé* of Doctor Jogtrot.

JACK. And who's Jogtrot?

MRS. T. Jessie's guardian; a retired physician; a very eminent man in the scientific world.

JACK. Oh! ah (*aside*). Confound Jogtrot!

MARTHA *appears at C., followed by* DOCTOR JOGTROT.

MARTHA (*announcing*). Doctor Jogtrot (*disappears*).

Enter DOCTOR JOGTROT *at C., black costume—white cravat, &c.*

JOGTROT (*to* MRS. TARLETAN). Pardon me, madam, if I am late.

MRS. T. Don't apologize, Doctor (*introducing*). My nephew, Captain Pepperpot—Doctor Jogtrot (*JOGTROT bows ceremoniously to JACK, who gives him a familiar nod in return*).

JOGTROT. I merely precede my esteemed young friend, Mr. Chirper, by a few minutes. Need I say, I should not presume to present him a competitor for the hand of this charming young lady (*bowing to JESSIE*), had I not discovered in his person qualities of the most solid description.

JACK. Solid—eh? I see! inclined to be stout—eh?

JOGTROT (*after a stare at JACK and turning to MRS. T. again*). In fact, I am proud to say that Mr. Chirper is, in the strictest sense of the word, a serious young man!

JACK (*aside*). Wheugh, I shan't be able to stand much more of Jogtrot! I feel I shan't!

MRS. T. No doubt I shall grieve to part with Jessie; but as my nephew has left the Army, I shall not be entirely alone.

JOGTROT (*to* JACK). You are a military man, sir?

JACK (*who has been showing a gradual irritation*). I was—till I left the Army.

JOGTROT. Left the Army? Allow me to congratulate you on your having done so, sir!

JACK (*trying to keep cool*). May I ask *why*?

JOGTROT (*in a supercilious tone*). Because, between ourselves, sir, I consider the military profession—

JACK (*bristling up*). Well, sir, what about the military profession? Anything to say *against* the military profession? (*advancing on JOGTROT, who retreats*).

MRS. T. (*aside to JACK*). Don't be so pugnacious, Jack! Recollect, you're not at the siege of Cabul now!

JOGTROT (*overhearing them eagerly*). The siege of Cabul?

MRS. T. Yes, Doctor, my nephew was there during the whole campaign!

JOGTROT (*to* JACK). Then, sir, it may be in your power to furnish me with the most interesting statistical information. Can you form any tolerably accurate estimate of the number of projectiles of various kinds and dimensions discharged from the enemy's batteries from the beginning of the siege to the end?

JACK. Frankly, my dear sir, I'm ashamed to say I never thought of counting them. (*Aside to MRS. TARLETAN*). I wish to speak

with all possible respect of this retired chemist and druggist of yours, but he's simply an inflated idiot!

JOGTROT. But to return to Mr. Chirper.

JACK. Yes, give us a little more about Dicky!

JOGTROT (*astonished*). Dicky?

JACK. Yes, same thing! Chirpers are all Dickies—Dickies, Chirpers, don't you see? Go on!

MARTHA entering at L.

MARTHA. A gentleman, ma'am, sent in his card (*giving card to MRS. TARLETAN*).

MRS. T. (*reading*). "Mr. Christopher Chirper," Show the gentleman in (*MARTHA goes to C., shows in Chirper and then exits*).

Enter CHIRPER in a similar costume to JOGTROT.

JOGTROT (*meeting CHIRPER and handing him forward and presenting him*). Allow me, Mrs. Tarletan—Mr. Christopher Chirper. Miss Jessie—Mr. Christopher Chirper (*to JACK*). Sir, Mr. Christopher Chirper (*CHIRPER bows very solemnly to each*).

JACK (*aside*). A cheerful-looking youth, very! one part waiter, three parts undertaker!

MRS. T. (*to CHIRPER*). The flattering terms in which Dr. Jogtrot has spoken of you more than suffice to ensure you a hearty welcome!

CHIRP (*bowing*). I trust, madam, I may merit the favourable opinion of my distinguished friend! Permit me to say, I am not one of those giddy, thoughtless butterflies who consume their mental and moral faculties in mundane futilities.

JACK (*after a long stare at CHIRPER—then aside*). He's not a man, he's a tract (*Aside to JESSIE as he goes towards table*). Lively boy, isn't he, Jessie? (*Sits and turns over leaves of an album.*)

CHIRP. My mode of life is simplicity itself. I rise at seven—

JACK. Oh, confound it!—hang it!—dash it! (*turning over leaves rapidly*).

CHIRP. Breakfast at eight, a slice of bread, a cup of milk, that constitutes my heartiest meal. I then walk for an hour in the square; dine at six.

JACK (*who has come down again*). Another cup of milk? You ought to keep a cow, Chirper, in the square.

CHIRPER. I then plunge into my favourite studies, till I retire to my pillow. Such is my life, madam.

JACK. And a very jolly one too, I should say, Chirper.

CHIRP. Ladies, I must now request permission to retire. I am due at the Philotechnic Institution.

MRS. T. (*to CHIRPER*). You'll return to luncheon, I hope?

JACK. Of course he will, of course you will (*thrusting CHIRPER's hat and umbrella into his hands*). I'll see there's an extra

ha'porth of milk taken in for you (*putting CHIRPER's hat on his head*).

CHIRPER and JOGTROT bow to JESSIE and exeunt at C., MRS. TARLETAN going up stage with them.

MRS. T. (*coming down*). A very, very agreeable young man indeed.

JESSIE (*satirically*). Yes; so remarkably sprightly.

JACK. With about as much humour in him as a damp umbrella.

MRS T. (*a little nettled*). I repeat, Mr. Chirper is a very agreeable person. I would put it to anybody—to the very first comer.

JACK. Would you? that's a bargain (*seeing BLUNT, who appears at C.*). There's my man, Stephen Blunt—he'll do; you said the first comer. Here, Blunt (*BLUNT advances*), tell me what's your opinion of the gentleman who has just gone?

BLUNT (*aside to JACK knowingly*). All right, captain, I haven't forgot (*aloud*) well, sir, I think he's charming, delightful, first chop.

JACK (*quickly*). No! No! I mean the other—the young one.

BLUNT. Well, sir, I think he's first chop too.

JACK. Ugh! triple dolt, brute, idiot (*BLUNT about to speak*). Silence, get out. Stop, come and dress me—Ugh! pudding-head (*shakes his fist at BLUNT and hurries out L.H., followed by BLUNT*).

MRS T. Why, what's the matter with the boy? such a temper all of a sudden.

JESSIE (*pouting*). No wonder; he sees well enough that you're tired of me—that you want to get rid of me—that you—oh! oh! oh! (*runs out crying at R.*).

MRS. T. (*astonished*). There's some mystery here I must clear up. Jessie! Jessie! (*hastens out after JESSIE at R.*).

JACK (*without, at L. H., very loud and angrily*). Hold your tongue, don't answer me; don't be insolent—there, there! (*Enters hurriedly from L. H.*). Wheugh! I'm better now I've let off some of the steam! ha, ha! Poor old Blunt (*stopping suddenly*). Stop, there's nothing to laugh at. I know I was a little bit out of temper—whose fault but his if I was?—with his infernal “first chop;” but I'd no business to strike the poor fellow, with my foot especially; I ought to be ashamed of myself. Ought to be? I am! Here he comes (*seeing BLUNT, who enters at L. H., looking pale and serious; after a little hesitation JACK walks up to him*). Stephen Blunt, I ask your pardon; there, that's settled; now shake hands (*holds out his hand, BLUNT looks away*). I'm sorry, Blunt, very sorry; would you like to kick me? or shall I kick myself? I'll try if you like!

BLUNT. I'd rather you had blown my brains out, captain. If any other man in the world had—had—you know what I mean—I'd have knocked him down.

JACK (*quietly*). Then knock me down!

BLUNT. As you are *now*, sir? no! but in a fair stand-up fight I would!—at least I'd try!

JACK (*with sudden excitement*). What's that? stand-up fight? this sort of thing? (*sparring and hitting out*).

BLUNT (*with a broad grin*). That's it, sir! If you'd only just let me knock you about for a round or two, I should feel like a man again!

JACK (*aside*). I rather like this! I do, by Jove! There's some fun in having one's head punched by one's servant! (*aloud*)! All right, old boy! you shall have satisfaction after your own fashion! Look out for some nice quiet spot, and in ten minutes' time we'll have it out; in the meantime, mum, not a word. (BLUNT *runs out at c., rubbing his hands in high glee.*)

JACK (*after a pause*). I'd better by half have stopped in China! I can't stop *here*! I can't look quietly on—probably with my eye bunged up—and see the woman I love married to a Dicky! No, no! I'll pack up at once!

MRS. TARLETAN and JESSIE *have entered R.H. during the above.*

MRS. T. (*overhearing*). Pack up?

JACK. Yes, Aunt. I'm off—good-bye!

MRS. T. Off? where? where?

JACK. I don't know! somewhere or other—if not there, somewhere else. Good-bye!

MRS. T. John Pepperpot, you are deceiving me! I want the truth! you hear, sir, the *truth*!

JACK. Do you? then you shall have it! I love Jessie—there! now you've got it!

JESSIE (*joyously*). You hear, Aunt? he loves me; *me* whom you are about to sacrifice—to immolate! (*in a tragic tone*).

JACK. On the altar of a Chirper! (*in a similar tone*).

JESSIE. It's cruel!

JACK. Barbarous!

JESSIE. Inhuman!

JACK. Savage!!

MRS. T. (*who has been trying to speak*). Will you let me speak? (*to JACK*). You say you love Jessie?

JACK. Awfully!

MRS. T. Well—unless, indeed, Jessie objects——

JESSIE (*very quietly*). But I don't!

MRS. T. In that case, the sooner you get married the better!

JESSIE. Oh, you kindest, best of Aunties! (*kissing her*).

MRS. T. Well, Jack? have *you* nothing to say to me?

JACK. Only this; that you can't form the faintest idea what a trump you are!

MRS. T. (*suddenly*). But, what about poor Mr. Chirper? He'll be here presently!

JACK. Of course, the sooner we put Dicky's pipe out the better.

MRS. T. I will speak to Dr. Jogtrot myself, and beg him to break the intelligence to his young friend.

JACK. Very well (*seeing BLUNT, who crosses at back*). Blunt, by Jove! (*exchanges a sign with BLUNT, who disappears*). Excuse me for a few minutes—I'll be back directly (*hurries up towards C., running against JOGTROT, who enters*). Beg pardon (*aside to him*). My aunt's got a little bit of news for you that'll rather astonish your upper works (*runs out at C.*).

MRS. T. You had better retire, Jessie (*aside to her*). Leave everything to me!

JESSIE *exits at R. H.*

JOGTROT. It seems, my dear lady, you have a communication to make to me?

MRS. T. I have; a very important one! I have just made a discovery which I confess has given me the greatest possible pleasure. In a word, my nephew loves Jessie, and Jessie loves my nephew!

JOGTROT (*very quietly*). In other words, Mr. Chirper is expected to resign his pretensions in your nephew's favour?

MRS. T. Exactly!

JOGTROT. My answer, madam, will be brief! I presented Mr. Chirper as a candidate for the hand of your niece, and, *my* ward—you received him graciously. I cannot, therefore, become an accomplice in your inconsistency, not to say *caprice*!

MRS. T. (*impatiently*). But don't I tell you the young people *love* each other?

JOGTROT (*very quietly*). What of that?

MRS. T. (*indignantly*). What of that?

JOGTROT. I myself have loved, madam!

MRS. T. But perhaps the lady did not love you in return?

JOGTROT. She did, madam, intensely! and married her dancing master!

MRS. T. (*in a compassionate tone*). Dear, dear! Of course you were inconsolable!

JOGTROT. No, madam, I went in for trigonometry, and that cured me! Why should your nephew not do the same?

MRS. T. Jack go in for trigonometry? ha! ha! Come, my dear doctor, you'll explain the state of affairs to Mr. Chirper, won't you! (*coaxingly*).

JOGTROT (*very stiffly*). Certainly not, madam!

MRS. T. (*angrily*). Then I will—and in the meantime I beg to assure you that I consider you a very uncivil, unamiable, and intensely disagreeable person!

[*Exit at L. H.*]

JOGTROT. Umph! a decided check for Chirper—who, if he loses the young lady, will also lose the thousand pounds I owe him. But it isn't necessarily *checkmate*. No—no! as the young lady's legal guardian I shall have something to say yet!

Enter JACK hastily at c., putting on his coat.

JACK (*laughing as he enters*). Ha! ha! poor old Blunt! he soon had enough of it! (*seeing DOCTOR*). Well, you've seen my aunt—eh? She rather astonished you didn't she? But really, now (*taking JOGTROT's arm familiarly*), you never thought your man had the ghost of a chance, did you?

JOGTROT. My man?

JACK. Yes, Dicky! here he is! (*going up to meet CHIRPER, who enters at c., aside to him*). Our intellectual friend has something to tell you! Be a man, Dicky (*slapping him on the back*). It's no use crying over spilt milk, my Trojan!

[*Exit at c., CHIRPER staring after him in astonishment.*]

JOGTROT (*aside*). There are circumstances under which a fib becomes a duty (*aloud and grasping CHIRPER's hand*). I congratulate you, she's yours! at least she will be!

CHIRPER (*very quietly*). Oh! joyful tidings.

JOGTROT. But it is possible you may have rival.

CHIRPER (*very quietly again*). Oh! maddening thought!

JOGTROT. But follow my advice and you shall win her yet. Never leave her side! say all sorts of tender things to her. By-the-bye, have you brought her a bouquet? No! Then go and get one, the bigger the better. Go at once—recollect, the bigger the better (*hurrying CHIRPER up stage, who goes out at c., shouting after him*)—the bigger the better!

JOGTROT (*coming down—then suddenly*). By no means a bad idea of mine; at any rate it's well worth the trial! Surely this fire-eating captain must have *some* blemish, *some* small vice or other, I don't care *how* small. I'll undertake to stretch it as far as it will go! Here comes his servant; I may be able to squeeze something out of him.

Enter BLUNT at c., one of his cheeks very swollen.

JOGTROT (*beckoning BLUNT*). Here, my worthy creature! I wish to speak to you (*BLUNT touches his cap and advances*). A swollen face, I see! Toothache?

BLUNT. No, sir. I'll tell you how it was. *I* makes a feint with my left (*hitting out, JOGTROT skips back*), when slap comes a right-hander straight from the elbow (*hitting out again, JOGTROT skips back again*), and catches me bang on the—

JOGTROT. Yes! yes! exactly; but tell me, have you been long with your gallant master?

BLUNT. Better than ten years, sir!

JOGTROT. The more to your credit, my fine fellow! here's a sovereign (*gives money*).

BLUNT. Thankee, sir! (*aside*). What's his little game, I wonder?

JOGTROT. I like the captain! I like him much! Rather a lively

temper perhaps; a little bit quarrelsome—eh? slightly pugnacious,—umh? And a sad fellow among the women, I'm afraid? Ha! ha! ha! (*poking BLUNT in the side*).

BLUNT. Who? Master? Not he! Only bring him face to face with a pretty wench and see if he don't stand there a-stammering and blushing like any big lubberly schoolboy.

JOGTROT (*aside*). The scoundrel *won't* speak! (*aloud*) I gave you a sovereign just now; oblige me by getting it changed for me.

BLUNT (*aside*). So, so! wanted to pump me, did he? I'll bring him a pound's worth of coppers! (*goes up, meets JACK, who enters at C., stops and whispers JACK, pointing to JOGTROT, then exit at C.*)

JACK. So, so! my serious friend, you not only, as my aunt tells me, refuse to withdraw your man, but you've been pumping Blunt about me, have you? (*touching JOGTROT on the shoulder*). You can spare me time for half a dozen words? Thank you (*very quietly*)! It seems you are not over and above anxious that I should marry my cousin? (*very quietly*).

JOGTROT. Frankly, I am *not*?

JACK (*still very quietly*). May I ask *why*?

JOGTROT (*aside*). He doesn't seem very explosive. I'll go it a bit! (*aloud*). In the first place, from my limited acquaintance with military men, I confess—I—(*shrugging his shoulders*).

JACK (*still very quietly*). Well, sir?

JOGTROT (*aside*). He doesn't seem *at all* explosive! I'll go it another *bit* (*aloud*). And although you have left the army, you can scarcely have failed to contract certain habits and pursuits, which, in my opinion, are more or less antagonistic to happiness in the married state!

JACK (*aside*). I'm getting the fidgets in my right leg! (*aloud*). In short, you look upon me as a decidedly disreputable person? (*with difficulty restraining his passion*).

JOGTROT (*alarmed and very quickly*). I didn't say so! (*aside*) I shan't go it any more bits; (*aloud*), but *seriously*! you don't, you *can't* really believe you love your cousin? You've only just returned from China.

JACK. What of that, as long as I didn't leave my heart behind me?

JOGTROT. Still, this sudden, *very* sudden, *remarkably* sudden attachment some people might be ill-natured enough to—to—to—

JACK (*with increasing impatience*). When you've quite done "to—to—toing," perhaps you'll get on!

JOGTROT. I repeat, some people might attribute to the lady's *fortune*, rather than to the lady herself (*with intention*).

JACK. Fortune? What, Jessie? (*after a short pause*). Well, so much the better! Not that I was aware of it.

JOGTROT (*smiling significantly*). Oh, you were *not* aware of it, eh?

JACK (*checking his anger*). I have said so once, sir!

JOGTROT (*smiling satirically*). Yes, you said so certainly!

JACK (*gulping down his anger, and very quietly*). Have you quite done? Then suppose we change the conversation! Now, if the thing were properly put to you, which do you think you would prefer? Having your nose pulled? (*JOGTROT retreats*), a sound horse-whipping? (*JOGTROT takes another jump backwards*), or a good kicking? (*swinging his right leg about; JOGTROT rushes out at c.*).

JACK. Ha! ha! ha! (*suddenly stopping*). Zounds! these infernal little pets of mine will be the ruin of me! Of course, he'll tell aunt—she'll scold—Jessie'll blubber—so shall I—at least I'll try, our marriage will be—but he can't have left the house yet! I'll run after him! Memorandum for the future—when you feel a sudden impulse to strangle a man, do it (*runs out at c. after JOGTROT*).

Enter MRS. TARLETAN and JESSIE, followed by JOGTROT.

MRS. T. Surely, Doctor, you must be mistaken? the thing is impossible!

JOGTROT. I grieve to say I have it from the best authority! an eye-witness. Half an hour ago, almost under this very roof, your nephew was engaged in a low, vulgar, disreputable, pugilistic encounter with his own servant!

MRS. T. A pugilistic encounter? But the reason?—the motive?

JOGTROT (*with malicious intention*). Is perhaps not very difficult to guess! Your waiting-woman, my informant, is a very comely young person, both master and man *may* have noticed it too—young men *will* be young men—a little *jealousy* perhaps? (*MRS. TARLETAN hastily rings small bell which is on the table.*)

Enter MARTHA at R. H.

MRS. T. Come here, Martha! You have informed Dr. Jogtrot that you witnessed a scene recently, which I need not describe, between Captain Pepperpot and his servant? Is this true?

MARTHA. Yes, ma'am, they were hard at it, ma'am, behind the summer-house, ma'am, a fisticuffing one another (*imitating absurdly*).

MRS. T. Tell me, has this man—Blunt, I think is his name—ever given you reason to think he—admires you?

MARTHA. Only so far as saying I was a niceish sort of girl! But lots have told me *that*!

JESSIE (*very eagerly*). And—his *master*—perhaps *he* may have—

MARTHA. Well, miss, the captain has certainly chucked me under the chin once or twice, but lots have done *that*!

MRS. T. You can go, Martha!

[*Exit* MARTHA at R. H.]

JESSIE. Oh, Auntie, this is dreadful! I never could have be-

lieved it of Jack! never! (*stops on a sign from MRS. TARLETAN, who sees JACK enter at L. H.*).

JACK (*as he enters hurriedly*). Can't find him anywhere (*seeing JOGTROT*). So, so! he's stolen a march on me (*aside to MRS. TARLETAN*). Aunt, I suspect our serious friend here has been giving you *his* version of a certain little—trumpety affair—that—

MRS. T. (*coldly*). He *has*!

JACK. Well, I confess I *was* just a trifle hasty! One of my little pets, you know—but if you only knew the provocation—

MRS. T. (*satirically*). We *do* know the provocation!

JESSIE (*imitating MRS. TARLETAN'S tone*). Yes, we *do* know the provocation!

MRS. T. Come with me, Doctor! We must have a little conversation! *serious* conversation!

JOGTROT. At your service, my dear madam (*aside*). I wonder how our gallant friend feels *now*!

[*Exit at C. with MRS. TARLETAN, JACK staring after them bewildered.*]

JACK. Jessie!

JESSIE (*very dignified*). Sir!

JACK (*astonished*). "Sir!" What's the matter? You seem annoyed—vexed.

JESSIE. I *am*!

JACK. Will you tell me why?

JESSIE (*with comic severity*). Ask your conscience, young man!

Enter MARTHA at C., carrying an enormous bouquet.

MARTHA. This beautiful nosegay, miss—just come—with Mr. Chirper's compliments (*gives nosegay, and exit R. H.*).

JESSIE. What a lovely bouquet! How very polite of Mr. Chirper!

JACK (*sulkily*). There's plenty of it, looks more like a bunch of greens! Of course, Jessie, you won't accept it?

JESSIE (*coldly*). Why not? I'm fond of flowers!

JACK. Yes, but you're not fond of Dicky! Come, Jessie, you'll return that bunch of greens—I mean that nosegay—to Mr. Chirper, won't you?

JESSIE (*pretending to admire the flowers*). Certainly not!

JACK (*checking his rising anger*). Take care, Jessie! I ask you once again!

JESSIE. I shall keep it!

JACK (*tenderly*). Jessie!—Cousin!

JESSIE. I repeat, I shall keep it!

JACK (*furious*). You shall *not* (*snatching bouquet from JESSIE and tearing it to pieces*). There, there, there! (*JESSIE screams*).

Enter MRS. TARLETAN at C., followed by DR. JOGTROT.

JESSIE. Oh, Aunt, (*running to her*), and you, sir (*to JOGTROT*).

Protect me from the violence of my cousin! Because Mr. Chirper sent me a nosegay, he has snatched it from me and torn it to pieces!

JOGTROT (*advancing to JACK*). Young man, I am amazed——

JACK. Go to the devil (*furiously, JOGTROT beats a retreat*).

MRS. T. (*sorrowfully*). Oh, Jack, Jack!

JACK. Harkee', Aunt—it strikes me I've been made to play rather a ridiculous part here. First, it's all Dicky, then it's all me! Now, it's all Dicky again! One would almost think I had been used merely as a bait to catch a bigger fish!

MRS. T. (*reproachfully*). Oh, nephew, nephew!

JOGTROT (*advancing*). If you allude to Mr. Chirper, sir——

JACK. Damn Mr. Chirper! (*hurries up, giving nosegay a violent kick, and exit L. H., slamming door violently after him*).

MRS. T. What a dreadful scene.

JESSIE (*half crying*). I'll never marry him!—never! never! never! (*picking up the flowers*).

MRS. T. Reflect, Jessie, reflect!

JESSIE. I have reflected (*trying to restrain her tears*). Mr. Chirper may be a trifle slow—and too fond of milk—but he wouldn't be always chucking young women under the chin—and fisti—fisti—cutting—I mean, *cuffing*!

JOGTROT. Then I may at once convey the joyful tidings to the thrice happy Chirper.

JESSIE (*harshly*). Yes! yes! the sooner the better (*JOGTROT hurries out at C.*).

MRS. T. Oh, my darling! I fear you have been too rash—too impetuous.

JESSIE. No! I—I——(*suddenly throwing herself sobbing violently into MRS. TARLETAN'S arms*).

BLUNT (*heard without*). All right, Captain! (*Enter BLUNT at L. H., carrying a portmanteau*).

MRS. T. (*to BLUNT*). Where are you taking that luggage?

BLUNT. To the nearest hotel hereabouts, ma'am. Master's off directly and I'm going with him!

MRS. T. Oh! then you bear him no malice!

BLUNT. Malice—me! What for, ma'am!

MRS. T. Pshaw!—in a word I know what has lately taken place between you.

JESSIE. Yes! the fisti—fisti—you know (*with a lame imitation of sparing*).

MRS. T. (*with intention*). And we also know the cause!

BLUNT. Do you? and do you think I'd leave the captain, just because of a little—little bit of a—kicking?

MRS. T. What? Then it wasn't about—her?

BLUNT (*surprised*). Her?

JESSIE. Yes. M—Martha!

BLUNT. What? me and master fall out about a petticoat? Ha! ha! Not we! I suppose I had offended him somehow or other, and

he got into one of his "little pets," and—struck me—not with his hand, ma'am. It nearly broke my heart. He saw it, and like a true gentleman as he is, he asks me, with almost tears in his eyes, to give him a good hiding—and we sets at it at once then and there—and that's all about it, ma'am.

MRS. T. (*suddenly*). Take that luggage away. Not a word. Remember I am commanding officer here! (BLUNT *makes a salute*). In the meantime I'll see your master.

JESSIE. Yes—we'll see your master.

BLUNT. Do please, ladies; and if you'd only try just to cheer him up a bit.

JESSIE (*eagerly*). Is he unhappy, then?

BLUNT. All I know is, as he was ramming his things into his portmanteau with his fists—this sort of thing (*imitating*)—I saw a great big one hanging to the tip of his nose.

JESSIE. A great big what? Not a tear?

BLUNT. Yes miss! he said it was a cold in his head, but I know better.

JACK (*heard from room L. H.*). Blunt! Blunt!

BLUNT. Coming, sir! (*about to run to the door L. H.*).

MRS. T. (*pointing to C.*). That way, if you please. Remember, obedience is the first duty of a soldier (BLUNT *makes a salute and exit at C., with portmanteau*).

JESSIE. Oh, Auntie! only fancy poor Jack with a tear hanging to the tip of his great big nose—I mean, a great big tear! Why, *why* did you let me tell my guardian that I'd never marry Jack? Do run after him, and tell him I've changed my mind, and that I'll *never*, never, never marry any one else. Do make haste, Auntie dear. Do be a little bit impetuous like me (*during this she has urged MRS. TARLETAN towards C.*).

MRS. T. (*laughing*). Spoilt child! spoilt child (*kisses her and hurries out at C.*).

Enter JACK at door L. H. dressed in Tweed travelling suit, an overcoat over his arm, and a small bag in his hand.

JACK (*stops on seeing JESSIE*). A thousand pardons, Jes—I mean Miss Manvers. I expected to find my aunt.

JESSIE (*archly*). And you are disappointed at finding only *me*?

JACK (*aside*). What unseemly levity! (*aloud*). I cannot leave her roof without wishing her good-bye.

JESSIE. Of course not—but you're not going (*smiling*).

JACK (*assuming a very dignified manner*). I beg your pardon, miss!

JESSIE (*imitating JACK*). I beg yours, sir!

JACK. What? remain here and see you married?

JESSIE. Of course, how *can* I get married unless you *do* remain?

JACK (*indignantly*). You don't expect me to give Dicky away, I hope?

JESSIE. No; but I certainly *do* expect you will give yourself away! and to me who love you, oh, so dearly!

JACK (*throwing away his coat, &c., and clasping JESSIE in his arms*). Jessie darling! but what—what does it all mean?

JESSIE (*very rapidly*). That I know *why* you got fisti-fisti—you know—with your servant; that it wasn't about Martha at all; that all my guardian said about you was a great big story!

JACK. Oh! oh! So old Jogtrot has been poking his ugly nose into my affairs again, has he? (*savagely*) I'll wring it off!

JESSIE (*holding up her finger*). Now listen to me, Cousin Jack; if you cannot and do not control that dreadfully peppery temper of yours——

JACK (*very quickly*). But I *will*! I swear it by—by this (*taking small handbell off table*). Now, Jessie, if ever you see me getting the least little bit frantic, you've only to——

JESSIE. I understand (*taking bell and ringing it*).

JACK. That's it!

JESSIE (*looking towards c.*). Here comes my guardian; now do as I tell you; go over there (*pointing*; JACK *moves a few paces from her*); further than that! Now cross your arms (JACK *obeys*), look sulky!

JACK. This sort of thing? (*putting on a sulky look*).

JESSIE. Worse than that (JACK *puts on a hideous grimace*). That's better! Now turn your back to me (JACK *obeys*, JESSIE *also turns her back on JACK*).

JACK (*looking round*). Isn't there time just for one kiss?

JESSIE. No—no!

JACK. Only a tiny one!

JESSIE. Hush! (*they both hastily resume their positions back to back*).

Enter JOGTROT at c.

JOGTROT (*seeing them*). Dos à dos! The lady pouting—the gentleman frowning! Then the storm I contrived to raise is still at its height (*coming down and touching JACK on the shoulder*; JACK *turns to him with an intensely savage expression of face, making JOGTROT start back*).

JOGTROT (*in a soothing tone*). Cheer up, my gallant young friend; the sex, you know, is capricious, “sipping each flower, changing each hour.” It is sad—very sad!

JACK (*sulkily*). For me, not for you, who have always opposed my marriage with my cousin.

JOGTROT. I? On the contrary, not ten minutes ago I asked her if she had any lingering affection for you, and her answer was——

JESSIE. That I would marry Mr. Chirper.

JOGTROT. There, there! you hear!

JESSIE. Yes, but (*imitating JOGTROT*) “the sex is so capricious,” you know; “sipping each flower,” “changing each hour,” so now,

Guardy, I'll marry Jack, please (*bobbing a courtesy, then running to JACK, who takes her in his arms*).

JOGTROT (*shouting*). Stop! that's all wrong (*seeing MRS. TAR-LETAN and CHIRPER, who enter at c.*). You're just in time, madam! There's a gigantic—a colossal mistake here!

MRS. T. (*smiling*). A mistake? Not at all!

JOGTROT. Not at all! Am I to understand, then, madam, that after the deplorable—scandalous scene of this morning—

MRS. T. Which has been fully explained; and will never be repeated!

JACK. Never! I've sworn it (*looking at JESSIE and pointing to the small bell on the table*). No more tempers! no more "little pets."

JOGTROT (*aside*). One more chance! (*aloud*). All I desire is my ward's happiness! happiness!—poor girl! (*shrugging his shoulders and giving a deep sigh*).

JACK (*bristling up sharply*). What's that?

JOGTROT. (*sneeringly*). I believe, sir, I have already expressed my opinion of military men—as husbands!

JACK (*threateningly*). Take my advice, sir, and leave military men alone, or else—(*JESSIE takes small bell and rings it—JACK falls into chair laughing*).

JOGTROT. In a word—

MRS. T. Pardon me, Doctor, you have said quite enough already!

JESSIE (*indignantly*). More than enough, Dr. Jogtrot! (*advancing on JOGTROT, who retreats—she follows him up*). For the last ten minutes you've been insulting a better man than yourself, Dr. Jogtrot!—a far better man, Dr. Jogtrot!

JACK (*aside*). Holloa! here's JESSIE getting into a pet! (*takes second small bell and rings it—JESSIE and JACK fall into chairs roaring with laughter, and ringing their bells—JOGTROT staring at them in astonishment*).

CHIRPER (*to JOGTROT, in a sympathizing tone*). My dear respected friend—

JOGTROT (*turning fiercely on CHIRPER*). And you! standing there like a gaping idiot—ugh!

JACK. Oh! Dicky's all right he's got his cow! hain't you, Dicky?

CHIRPER. And the Philotechnic—where, by-the-bye, I am now due!

JOGTROT. So am I! come along—*slams his hat on his head, puts his arm in CHIRPER's, swings him round, and drags him out at c.*

JACK (*taking JESSIE's hand*). Mine! mine at last!

JESSIE (*smiling*). But remember, Jack, no more irritability—no more tempers.

JACK. No! Here, here I vow, protest, and declare is the last of Pepperpot's little Pets! (*kisses JESSIE's hand as curtain falls*).

For permission to act this piece apply to the Author by letter, to the care of MESSRS. KELLY & Co., 51, Great Queen Street, W.C.

OXFORD MEMORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY YEARS IN THE CHURCH,"
"AGONY POINT," &c.

SAMUEL PEPYS tells us in his Diary how in 1668 he saw the theatre almost completed, and how high the fees were for the sights of Oxford in those days. "We came to Oxford, a very sweet place, and paid our guide £1 2s. 6d.; the boy that showed us over the college, 1s." This was reasonable, but we find "to him that showed us the schools and library, 10s.; to him that showed us All Souls and Chichley's picture, 5s.; bottle of sack, 1s. Oxford mighty fine place, and well seated, and cheap entertainment. At night came to Abingdon, where had been a fair, and met many people and scholars coming home; some pretty good musick, and sang and danced till supper, 5s."

The theatre was five years in building, and on the 9th July, 1685, was a grand opening, described by Evelyn: "The dedication was with the greatest splendour and formality, and drew a crowd of strangers from all parts of the nation. Dr. South, the University's orator, made an eloquent speech, and not without some malicious and indecent reflections on the Royal Society. But to let that pass from an ill-natured man, the rest was in praise of the Archbishop and the ingenious architect. This ended with loud musick and panegyric speeches, and the next day with the more solemn lectures in all the faculties."

There seems to have been some one even then to represent the folly and the insolence that disgraces the gallery at commemorations at the present day. This was the *Terræ filius*, the University jester, "who entertained the auditory with a tedious, abusive rhapsody most unbecoming the gravity of the University, that unless it be suppressed it will be of ill consequence, as I afterwards," said Evelyn, "expressed my sense of it to the Vice-Chancellor and several heads of houses, who were perfectly ashamed of it, and resolved to take care of it in future." Still, it was twenty years before the office of *Terræ Filius* was suppressed.

"He was appointed," says Jeffreason, "as an academic Merry Andrew." There were generally two, who worked in couples and talked up to each other with pre-arranged jests. Speeches being in Latin, and unintelligible to the majority, these jesters were engaged to enliven the proceedings. The jester might interpose ridiculous comments and would indulge in satire. Sometimes he carried it too far, and once was deprived of his fellowship at New

College. Imagine a *Terræ filius* speech, written by Dr. South, who held this queer office, preserved in the Bodleian, "very deficient in wit and its topics low and vulgar." Commemorations, and *encænias*, begun with the Earl of Westmorland's installation, were commenced with a caution significant of the rowdy manners of commemorations since, *that the students behave with such order and decency as become gentlemen of a liberal education*. At first it was a tedious business of eight hours. No wonder men sought relief in fun of any kind. At the installation of the Duke of Portland in 1793, luckily the ladies were admitted first. A rush of 3,000 men was made. Gowns were torn, caps broken, and pugilistic rounds fought. The "Broad" was strewn with shoes, buckles, gowns, caps, and prostrate men. Pick-pockets from town came dressed in M.A. costume. Fancy all this row when Mrs. Billington sang, as Catalani did in 1810 and Jenny Lind on a recent occasion. Again in 1818 an eye-witness writes: "At nine o'clock the outer gates of the theatre were opened, when, even ladies had their clothes torn to rags, and lost shoes, trinkets, &c. Numbers of trinkets were afterwards picked from the mud.

In a comedy called "The Act at Oxford," at Drury Lane, 1704, a *Terræ filius* is introduced, who thus introduces himself and his vocation:

"To begin, I will first acquaint you with what a *Terræ filius* is. Why, he's the university jester, the terror of fuddling doctors and dissolute commoners, a servitor in scandal and harlequin of the sciences. His continual railing at the university looks as if he were married to her, and his expulsion proves that he is divorced from her."

"The real nature of collegiate studies," says an elegant writer, "is still as little known by the generality as it was a hundred years ago. Not one in fifty, even of those who have profited by them, could give the true reasons of their excellence. University studies are but a small part of collegiate education. Professors or lecturers may form the scholar; they cannot make the man. It is in this formation of character—a higher aim surely, than any mere scientific attainments—that our universities and public schools must take their stand. The best of all knowledge, self-knowledge, is the staple they impart. A man educated in it rarely mistakes his own position or feels uneasy in it." So true is this, that I have often heard men say, "This is beyond me, I cannot go the pace. In the fifth form at Eton too many could give me the go-by."

But I could name one, who, looking back on college days past, could sum up most of his advantages, and say: "Oh, for the days when I had rooms to myself, with an oak to shut intruders out, the college library for reference, and lectures on all I wanted or was good for me to read." Then there were examinations and class-

lists always coming or expected, literary men to converse with, the latest news, the answers or the failings of class-men, successful or disappointed, as the talk of every dinner table; not to mention the easiest ways to do the hardest work, and rumoured crotchets and new examiners, told by some man who heard it of some one else, who heard it at a tutor's breakfast—reports which give such a timely fillip to a reading man, who is beginning to knock up. When all these stimulatory influences were in the air I breathed and the sphere in which I moved, whom can I blame but myself if I threw such opportunities away?

Then there were those awe-inspiring, and most admonitory buildings of the place, the Schools for Examination, that seemed to lie in my direct way to and from every place. Oh! who can pass them and see that door by which so many a poor fellow with white tie and bands has gone in trembling, come out sanguine, and been ready to sink again from excitement, as he waited to read his fate in the class-lists yet wet from the examiner's pen! Oh! those Schools, and that classic walk contiguous with such unclassic name, yeleft "the Pig Market." "Who that," as Falstaff said, "had a heart in his belly bigger than a pin's head," could ever look around as he passed that square, and not feel the place admonitory indeed? Old Orpheus' vocal notes were as nothing to those placarded, these dismal-looking, doors. Oh, what a sinking, what a sense of a certain vacuum by nature most abhorred, have I felt as I crossed that court, and stood and pondered on what would be the feelings with which I should go in, come out, and wait for testamur or class paper, when a few short terms had passed away!

Then to view the countless volumes of the Bodleian—to study the marbles, the pictures, the prints, the curious relics of Tradescant and of Ashmole, the modern contributors of the Duncan's—to read the many notices that overlay the walls of the Schools, of lectures and readings by noted men on every tongue, from Sanscrit to Anglo-Saxon, and on every subject, from pastoral theology to agricultural chemistry, is enough to overwhelm, by the embarrassment of its riches, the zeal of the most promising and ardent student.

Walk where you will in Oxford there are countless associations to turn your thoughts: the quadrangle of Wolsey, the cloisters of Laud, the walk of Addison, and the rooms of Johnson, proclaim a severe and long-tried system, whose fruits have more than answered in richness, though they differ in kind from the expectations of the founders.

To look back over college days makes a man for a moment pensive, if not melancholy. It is a little life in miniature. It has its dawn, its noon-day, and its night; its youth, its manhood, and its age; first proud self-complaisance, with warm and sanguine hopes, as of days too many to count; of strength,

vigour, and resolution, too ripe to fail; then a more subdued and tempered season, with schemes more moderate for greater safety; the first dawn of suspicion and distrust in itself and others; and at last the autumn and the harvest—when the work of spring is done, or closed, at least, irrevocably, and when the wise may exult as they reap, but the foolish must sigh for the days when they were too thoughtless or too confident to till or to sow.

As to the social intercourse of college, everything which happens, from the rustication of some fast man to the installation of a Chancellor, from the winning of a cricket match to the last Ireland Scholarship, or expected double first-class in the Schools, all these matters soon spread; every college is soon well informed of what is notable in any other. If there is any state trial or political crisis, or anything new expected in the literary world, why, there was always a Sugden, Denman, or Paul in one college, or a Scott, Wilberforce, or Lockhart, or if not, a nephew or cousin, at least, of Southey, Moore, or Rogers in another, or at least some man who knew some one else who had given him the last news of Abbotsford or Brentwood. And then how grateful is the importance of being purveyor of these state secrets, or Parnassian mysteries. Then with what interest do we read the same speech in Thucydides, or the same chorus of Æschylus, but in which the best man of the day was examined the morning before.

What is the mere parochial gossip of our vacation compared with the breadth of information and the stirring interests of a university breakfast or wine party? The one is limited almost to the bounds of a single parish; the other is enriched with the tributary streams of daily history from every quarter of the British Empire. And what is your vacation society, too? Where but in one of our universities can you, in any stated morning, meet ten or fifteen young men together, all accustomed only to the best society, and with minds yet untainted by the selfishness, the jealousies, the contentions, and animosities which the daily struggle for daily bread, the galling compromises of an independent spirit, and all the "contumely which the deserving from the unworthy take," insensibly imprint upon the heart, blunting the fine-edged true nobility and marring the delicate sensibility of the man? No, no. Few men are blessed with the chastening influence of this society after academic days.

But be it remembered that to enjoy these benefits a youth must be placed in a fair position to take full advantage of this social as well as intellectual sphere. Yes. It is quite possible to be in Oxford and not of it. Some have no higher aim in sending their sons to college than to profit by the endowments, to qualify with the name of B.A. or M.A.—a mere speculation of business, perhaps to add to a prospectus for a school-master. This, though not unknown at Oxford, is far more common at Cambridge. A friend who migrated from Cambridge, after six terms spent there, to

Oxford remarked to me that the difference which struck him was especially this: at Cambridge he felt in a place of business, while it was education purely at Oxford.

This is well explained by Mr. Stedman, in his excellent guide to college, called "*Oxford: its Social and Intellectual Life.*" I agree with him that for a real university education a parent must be prepared to spend about £75 on rooms, fees, and preliminary expenses, and not less than £220 a year afterwards. From £850 to £1,000 for the expenses total for the matriculation to the degree, including private "coaching"—required if a man reads for honours—is a fair and not an extravagant estimate. To live as a gentleman no man should be prepared with less.

It is sometimes said that a man with proper care and economy may live at a college for £140 a year, the year academical being only six months, and graduate for £400 in all.

No doubt he can do so; but this will be Oxford with all the best part of Oxford left out. He may stint himself to the plainest meals, though here I don't pity him, but he must not spend a penny for wines or entertainments of any kind. He must have a tailor's bill at which a poor clerk would smile. By refusing to subscribe to college clubs, and withdrawing himself from the society of his equals; by borrowing his neighbour's books and his neighbour's spoons, he must lead the life of a smug! This is not an exaggerated picture of the life of many, very many, undergraduates. And what a contrast this is to the bright picture a young man naturally forms of a university life. Such a poor fellow is obliged to decline hospitality, for his proper pride will not allow him to accept that which he knows his humble means do not enable to return. He refuses to row, for he cannot afford the subscriptions; he will not be able to take his place in his college eight-oar or Torpid because the incidental expenses will be too great for his scanty allowance.

An undergraduate will generally feel obliged to subscribe to college clubs, and should, if not too poor, make it a point of honour to support such institutions; for an ordinary college owes in a great degree its reputation to the position it takes on the river and in the cricket-field, and this must fail unless its clubs are properly supported. We confess there is often an excessive amount of moral pressure applied for the purpose to men unfortunately who are really unable to subscribe, but whose poverty is held to be a mere pretence. Such men are in a cruel position—a fact which parents would do well to consider. A poor fellow in this false position must seek the society of men, poor and cramped like himself, or perhaps in lieu of such, prefer his own; his temper becomes soured, and the man who came to Oxford with bright and pleasant hopes retires thence anything but a grateful son, with no happy memories to cheer him, and it may be with a moroseness which will cling to him throughout his life.

Such men had better pursue their studies at home. The degree they take is a mere ticket to impose on society at large, for of academical training and influences they have little indeed.

The *genius loci* of Oxford surpasses that of every town in England. It were hard to pass three years there without some humanising influence of those grey walls which speak of medieval times and solemn associations with a long series of great men who have made it the early sojourn in their mortal pilgrimage, and great men who have passed away, but not without leaving great works to represent them, most truly "footprints in the sands of Time."

Let us take a walk among the colleges in the order of foundation.

The thirteenth century has given us, beside St. Mary's, three colleges :

1. University College, then restored, though said to date from Alfred the Great. Here studied Bishop Ridley, Lords Eldon and Howell.

2. Balliol, the college of Robert Southey and Adam Smith.

3. Merton, the college of Bishops Hooper and Jewell, Wickliffe, and Dr. Harvey (the discoverer of the circulation of the blood).

The fourteenth century has left us four colleges :

1. Exeter, the college of Samuel Wesley, Froude, and Lord Coleridge.

2. Oriel, the college of Bishop Kerr, Sir Walter Raleigh, Pusey, Keble, Newman, and Archbishop Whately.

3. Queen's, the college of the "Black Prince," Henry V., Cardinal Beaufort, and Wycherley.

4. New College, famed for the honour of William Pitt and Sydney Smith.

The fifteenth century has given us three colleges :

1. Lincoln, the college of Sir W. Davenant and John Wesley.

2. All Souls, the college of Jeremy Taylor, Blackstone, and Sir Christopher Wren.

3. Magdalen, the college of Cardinal Wolsey, John Hampden, Addison, and Gibbon.

The sixteenth century has given us six colleges :

1. Brasenose, the college of Ashmole, of Burton, author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy," and Reginald Heber.

2. Corpus, the college of Keble and John Conington. It was founded by Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester.

3. Christchurch, founded by Cardinal Wolsey, the college of Wellington, Canning, Peel, Gladstone, John Locke, William Penn, Ben Jonson, and Charles Wesley.

4. Trinity, the college of Lord North, Earl of Chatham, Walter Savage Landor, Cardinal Newman and Lord Selborne.

5. St. John's, connected with Merchant Taylors' School by twenty-one scholarships, held at £100 a year for seven years. This was the college of Archbishops Laud and Laxton.

6. Jesus College, founded by Queen Elizabeth, at the suggestion of Hugh Price, especially as a place of education for Welshmen.

The seventeenth century has given us colleges :

1. Wadham, the college of Sir Christopher Wren, Admiral Blake, Lord Westbury, and Dr. Bentley, who, though a Cambridge man, was an M.A. of Wadham.

2. Pembroke, the college of Bishop Bonner, John Pym, Beaumont, Blackstone, George Whitfield, Sir Thomas Browne and Dr. Johnson.

In the eighteenth century we have one college only :

1. Worcester, the college of Lovelace, De Quincey, Sir Kenelm Digby, Foote, and the late Bishop Jackson.

In the present century we have Keble College and Hertford College. The history of the latter is curious. In the thirteenth century Hertford Hall was founded, and in 1740 incorporated as Hertford College, but from want of sufficient endowments the college was dissolved in 1805, part of the college property being appropriated to the Hertford scholarship, and part transferred to Magdalen Hall, a hall subsidiary to the Magdalen College. In 1874, by Act of Parliament, Magdalen Hall was dissolved, and its members were incorporated as Hertford College. Famous members of this college have been Hobbes, Tyndale, Lord Clarendon, C. J. Fox, Selden, and Dean Swift.

There are indeed subjects for reflection as we wander about this city of colleges. A man must be miserable indeed who can live without improvement in taste and feeling amidst so much architectural beauty and such inspiring associations. As to the natural beauty, the Christ Church meadow, with the Isis and the Cherwell, and the gardens of Magdalen and New College especially, where the richest verdure blends with the grey antiquity of the buildings—this it were hard to find elsewhere. Here we have “sermons in stones and good in everything.”

Oxford, like a large school, a school for adults, is a little world—a stage for rehearsals, and where errors are comparatively harmless, before we encounter a more censorious audience in the drama of life. As we move up term by term from the lowest table to the highest in our college hall, from the days of our freshman's study to our final examination, we seem to have passed from youth to maturity. It is a sphere to rectify our illicit spirits and then clarify our judgment of men and manners. We learn while walking through the crowd of life neither to run against any one nor to let any one run against us. We are taught to feel our way with our neighbour's prejudices—to watch the cloud on an angry brow, to say enough and not too much—there is no mercy for presumption or for praising—to treat kindly and tenderly those little failings and conceits which make up the compound man.

Charles Lamb spoke of men of imperfect sympathies: he

means men who work not glibly and smoothly in the machinery of life, more like the grit than the oil in the social wheel—men of repulsive attraction—men who, in conversation, hold you to your word without the grace to fit their answer to your meaning. Of all the secrets of worldly success or homely happiness for ourselves or others, there is nothing like perfect sympathies. "There's such divinity doth hedge a king;" there's such a balmy influence sheds its halo around a really sympathetic soul. Some musical buildings deliver us of our voice, some sympathetic people of our thoughts and feelings, their heartstrings being in perfect tone and unison with our own. This is a character truly invaluable; and for its first growth and culture commend me to the society of Oxford. Even if I had learnt "small Latin and less Greek" I should still feel my academical days not wholly thrown away.

As to the chief studies of Oxford, what can be more valuable than to study man—human thought and human character—and to study man under such varieties of age and clime as shall distinguish between individual peculiarities and the caprices of fashion, and the creature man as his Creator made him? Some persons think geology preferable as a study; some would suggest astronomy, or chemistry, or any other science. I am myself much interested in the strata of the three series, nor do I look with indifference on the starry firmament above, or in organic formations below, but still I must maintain that "the proper study of mankind is man." The *nil admirari*—that knowledge of human nature which makes us surprised or disappointed at nothing, which enables us to identify every fault and foible, every virtue, vice, or passion in many a scene and character in this world's drama, in an almost unbroken series from Adam to the present day—this claims precedence for youth over all other studies; and such are the chief studies of Oxford.

Some men examine curiously a Saxon coffin or armour worn at Flodden Field, and boast a great discovery in inferring that the stature of man is at least as large as in former ages. With no less triumph do men pronounce on the structure of fish or plants anterior to the flood. And is it less curious, less a triumph, to penetrate and to analyse the thoughts and feelings of generations past; to ascertain that for thousands of years the heart of man has throbbed with the same emotions, that envy and other passions have borne the same torture to the breast; and that conscience in the days of Æschylus as well as Juvenal has shaken the same avenging scourge over the guilty head? I will conclude with a quotation worth considering in Mr. Stedman's excellent manual before mentioned:

"The man of letters may view with admiration the monuments which the genius of Plato, Demosthenes, and Cicero has left to posterity; the orator may read with both pleasure and profit the models of eloquence; the student of war may follow with delight

the campaigns of the most consummate strategists of all ages; the poet may turn to works which have never been surpassed; the historian to authors whose writings, now more than two thousand years old, are yet the choicest product of the historic muse. These books, read where the very atmosphere is classical, where every stone and tower speak of an antiquity which is perennial, of a learning which will survive the inventions of this modern age as it has survived the struggles of a thousand years—must these not invigorate the mind and chasten the spirit, and render the whole man fitter and abler to meet and conquer those trials and temptations which must necessarily beset him!"

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THE DEBTOR'S PROGRESS.—CONFESSIONS OF A COLLEGIAN.

"At first I entered college," said Richard Lyall, "I hated the very name of debt. My friend Madden called upon me a few days before I left home, and said, 'Let me give you one piece of advice; never order what you have not the money to pay for; ready money needs no accounts; but long credit will baffle the calculations of any man alive.'"

"Oh, that does not apply to me," I answered; "for I feel quite uncomfortable if I owe a tradesman a shilling."

"So I could say once," was the reply; "but before I left Magdalene I could walk about quite at my ease £500 in debt."

"I bought my cap and gown at a tailor's shop in the Turl. He said he hoped to have my custom, and would give as long credit as any man. I told him that was no recommendation to me. 'I do not know that, sir,' he answered: 'you will find the convenience of it after a little while; such, at least, is usually the case at college.' I am ashamed to say that this very cap and gown was not paid for till two years after."

"My debts grew insensibly; I forgot that though severally small, they were becoming collectively large. I bought coats and waistcoats of one man, and trousers of another; books, grocery, wine, pictures, furniture, hosiery; confectionery to entertain my friends, and other articles, each purchased at more shops than one; these, together with the hire of boats often, and horses occasionally, soon caused me, quite unconsciously, to have a list of twenty creditors. At the end of two terms I found that I owed them, as nearly as I could guess—for I did not like to ask for bills—on an average £5 each. Here, then, were debts to the amount of £100 as a nest-egg; or, I may say, as so many dragons' teeth sown to raise up a host of enemies to destroy me."

"This stage of my progress was one of pitiable ignorance and childless heedlessness: I knew nothing of the value of money, never having had above £5 which I could call my own, till the day my father gave me a cheque for £72 12s., as a quarter's allowance at college."

"Out of this about £47 remained when I had paid battels; which sum seemed to me so large, that I never thought of estimating how much it would allow for each kind of expenditure; so it is no wonder that I found my bills amounting to more by half than my allowance. This first stage, I can honestly say, was one of excusable ignorance. Had my father not been exceedingly thoughtless, he would have presumed that I should want occasional advice and admonition. He might have reflected that he was continually surprised at the accumulation of his own expenses, after all his experience. This would have convinced him at once that the management of money must be difficult to me; and had he gone to Oxford at the end of my first term, collected my bills, and talked in a friendly way about the company I could afford to keep, and pointed out the extent to which I was outrunning my income, I have no doubt that my present ruin and disgrace would have been averted; for at that time I was a stranger to the temptations which, at a later period, rendered counsel useless.

"And here I cannot refrain from observing, that of all the blindness I have ever witnessed, that of the fathers of my fellow-collegians seems to be the most remarkable.

"If a man brings up a son as a lawyer, a surgeon, or a merchant, he makes such an arrangement with a professional man in his own town, that when the hours of business are over, he may take charge of his son under his own roof; or if he sends him to a distance, he articles or apprentices him to some substantial family man, who undertakes to act a parent's part. But if the same man sends a son to Oxford, though from the number of thoughtless youths who meet together, he might feel sure that the temptations must be stronger than in any mercantile town in England, he leaves him without inquiry for three years together. He may say, that he presumes tutors will render his vigilance unnecessary; but with what reason can he presume that any tutor can adequately perform a parent's part? Common sense must tell him it would be very difficult to do; common experience proclaims that it often remains undone. In every newspaper he may read the fact that there is no such check at either university as will prevent a young man from incurring as many debts as the tradesmen believe he will be able to pay. To this extent the father knows his son may everywhere obtain credit; but at Oxford or Cambridge he may be sure that he will be trusted to a larger amount, because, as a member of a university, he is naturally presumed to have more money at his command.

"A second observation I have made about fathers is, that when they do attempt to advise or instruct their sons, they evince such an ignorance of their ways, and such want of sympathy for their feelings, that they utterly fail in gaining their confidence. Once, and only once, did I ever hear a man say that he could call

his father a truly confidential adviser and a friend. For the most part, a father and 'father confessor' are two widely different characters. I have heard many a man declare, that if his father had ever manifested indulgence and consideration towards him, instead of a distant austerity and impatience, as if he expected to find him a very model of perfection, he should have been glad to have asked his advice and assistance at a period when he might have avoided the most ruinous consequences.

"But to return from this digression about the blindness and want of tact on the part of fathers—I said that debts to the amount of £100 accumulated in my two first terms.

"This completed the first stage in the Debtor's Progress—the state of Ignorance and Heedlessness. This was followed by a second, which I may call the stage of Temptation.

"I never had any of the qualifications of a reading man. I went to Oxford to take a common degree without hope of honours, consequently, having few resources from within, I had to seek those from without. The first source of temptation was the want of the family fireside. When I lived at home, so long as I could sit with my feet on my father's fender and sip a glass of negus after dinner, and talk to my sisters, or go with them occasionally to spend the evening with a neighbour, I was perfectly contented. A few shillings spent in cigars, and sometimes the cost of a ticket for a ball, was all I had occasion to spend. But at college, this fireside, or the amusements which supplied its place, were ruinously expensive. I must explain, that at five o'clock we meet at dinner to the number of ten, twelve or fifteen men at each table. The conversation is lively and inspiring, about the college boat, the steeple-chase, or the hunt, or some match to come off between some two of the sporting set. As soon as dinner is over, a man will naturally desire to carry on the same conversation over a glass of wine. If you refuse, you must separate from your friends as they run helter-skelter up the staircase to the room of the man whose turn it is to furnish the wine: you must endure to be called a slow fellow, and may sometimes be nearly pulled to pieces by some of the party who lay hold of your gown to lead you off by force; for these high and jovial spirits will take no denial. If you persist, and say you cannot join them, you must sport your oak, and shut yourself into your room and all intruders out, and there remain alone in the dumps, till the chapel bell calls you to encounter the same set of men again more boisterous even than before. After chapel you must sit in solitude all the rest of the evening.

Nor is this all: society cannot be kept up with this seclusion. You must forego your position in your college, and sink down among a set of slow men whom you do not like, and who, as is too often true of slow and economical men at college, are not exactly of the style and stamp you would desire to characterize

your associates. Of course this does not apply to studious men. A love of literature is a great safeguard: it produces habits of recreation and visiting very inexpensive. Neither does the full force of this temptation apply to those who resolutely resist from the first. I am only speaking of the very common case of men who inadvertently become associated with those in whose society they delight, but cannot afford to keep. From this you may estimate the degree of self-denial required, and the strong temptation that all but reading men must feel to join a wine set every day after dinner. I do not say that all even of those who are not reading men are so tempted; I speak only of men who are what every father would wish his son to be, men of honourable emulation, fine-spirited lads, and general favourites with their companions.

"Supposing, then, that a high-spirited lad does not resist this fireside temptation, as we will call it, and, believe me, it is one of the most trying description; let us follow out this indulgence in all its costs and consequences, and consider what it involves.

"First of all, it involves a large consumption of wine, and a formal wine party, with a handsome dessert, at least once a fortnight. Of course in the same society there will be an occasional interchange of breakfasts and suppers. In all these entertainments the most expensive men set the fashion; and even those who desire to be most economical will strive not to be outdone. 'While we are in for it,' you hear men say, 'a pound more or less is not worth saving; least of all, at the risk of being called shabby.' The cost of this kind of society is not confined to college walls. Who can hear of all the animating exploits of the hunting field without desiring to have just one day to see what hunting is like? Who can sit by, especially when the bottle has gone freely round, and hear of a proposal to order a buggy and drive over to see some theatricals in a barn, or to enjoy other scenes of life and jollity, which, though certainly it is very foolish, yet it must be confessed that some of the gravest fathers feel merry as they hear it told in the vacation, little suspecting that it is a kind of fun for which they will one day have to pay—Who can hear this, and at all times say, 'No, I can't afford it?—you may go every one of you, but I shall stay at home.'

"The force of this temptation may be the better appreciated when I remark, that here again a man feels that he loses his standing, and is called, and actually becomes and feels himself, a slow fellow compared with the rest of his set, unless he sometimes joins their spree, and shows that he is as much up to fun as any of them. As to expense, he is told it need only be for once in a way and that it is not as if a man were to keep a couple of hunters for three years together. So he thinks, good easy man, there is no reason why he should not enjoy just one hunt, or only one tandem;

or merely to say he has done such a thing, enter a horse in one—positively the last—steeple-chase.

“However, say, my dear old college friends, is it not too true, that of all temptations in this mortal world, one of the most irresistible is a craving for artificial excitement and an impatience of that ennui which is the reaction produced by the first cup of pleasure, and which is only to be allayed even for the time by a yet larger draught from a second?

“Temptation is like a sly old wheedling beggar that must be frowned off our premises at first sight. We must not allow him to come near us, or listen to his guileful tale. If once you give way to his importunity, and relieve his necessities, he will not only come again far bolder than before, but he will tell a dozen others, each more urgent than the last, and you will be beset from all quarters and on all pretences every hour in the day.

“Again, if you cannot bear to be outdone in-doors, you will be equally reluctant when out. If you have hunted or driven a tandem once to please others, you will do so a second time to please yourself. Probably you may be complimented on your dexterity by some who are judges, or taunted by some who are not, and may thus be induced to go and try some famous leap, or drive a tandem once more, if it be only to make some casual vaunting good. On each of these occasions, so consistent a thing, and so complete in all its branches is extravagance, you will perhaps be too late for hall, and have to pay for a dinner and bottle of wine at a coffee-house.

“But all this time, you will ask me, has a man no fears of future consequences, no compunctions of conscience? His head grows more and more in a whirl: he intends soon to pull up; but to-day and to-morrow and the next day steal silently on: the longer he yields to temptation, and the more he is accustomed to danger, the more familiar it grows, and the less he fears it. He feels as yet none of the horrors of which he had heard. He does not see how deeply he is becoming involved; for a man’s liabilities, whether moral or pecuniary, are not to be taken in at a mere general view. Satan knows that what a man thinks he always can do he never will do; the principle on which cockneys rarely see St. Paul’s nor sinners Heaven! So on goes the spendthrift. If his first stage was one of ignorance and heedlessness, the second is one of wilful blindness and temptation. From this we will pass to

“The third stage in the Debtor’s Progress—the stage of Desperation.

“But before I proceed, I must observe, that if I appear to extenuate my extravagance by dwelling on my temptations, I have a far more laudable purpose in view, which I must forego if I paint my life in colours either darker or brighter than it deserves.

"I do not deny that my extravagance was truly disgraceful ; yet so easy and gradual was the descent—so smooth and imperceptible my motion to the lowest gulf of ruin—that I was perfectly unconscious of the time I was involved beyond any reasonable hope of retrieving. I would have all collegians take warning, and I would equally call upon their parents. For if once a young man completes the first stage of ignorance and heedlessness in money matters, the next thing is to be the victim of seducing and extravagant habits, which throw a veil over his eyes, and make him feel most secure when most in danger, until at last his position can no longer be disguised, he is forced to see it, is thrown into desperation, and becomes prepared for such scenes as I am now about to disclose.

"At my father's death I was entitled to an estate of between three and four hundred a year. Still I never contemplated on that account exceeding my college allowance of £250 a year. When a year and a half had passed away, I found that extravagance in horses, for which I thought I could partly compensate by greater economy in other respects, had involved heavier tavern bills, and a constant drain of ready money for turnpikes, hostlers, and 'refreshment for man and horse.' I also found that I had much more to pay for clothes, and, to crown all, £40 for a horse I had staked and killed.

"The death of Maunder's mare produced an effect of which I had no conception. My bookseller and grocer, and every horse-dealer of whom I had hired, sent me in their bills, and requested payment. Thinking this very extraordinary, I went immediately to a friend of sixteen terms' standing, and told him that perhaps he had experience enough to explain why bad luck should come upon me all at once.

"'Say no more,' said he: 'when first I heard of your accident, I observed, A hint for the duns. The truth is, you are going too fast. After a heavy loss comes a run upon a bank—do you understand? Pray how many children has your father?'

"'Eight besides myself.

"'He does not drive four in hand, or cut a dash, I presume?'

"'No: he only keeps a one-horse chaise, with a leather head and apron, for a rainy Sunday.'

"'A sort of cruelty trap, I suppose, to carry all the family?'

"'Well, something like it; but what has that to do with the present question?'

"'Why, surely, you are not so green as all that? If the governor's pace is *slow*, and the son's pace is *fast*—do you understand now?'

"'What! do you mean to say that the Oxford tradesmen calculate the fortune of the fathers before they trust the sons? Why, cannot any man in Oxford walk into every shop in the High Street, and be but too gladly served, and almost forced to

book, instead of pay for, whatever he pleases to take? and does not the tradesman thank him for his custom, and offer him credit before he even asks his name and college?

“No. If the Oxford tradesmen are so accommodating, they have altered their style of business uncommonly.”

“No! What do you mean? Why, my good fellow, it is notorious.”

“That is to say, if a Servitor or Bible clerk had a fancy to a fifty-guinea chronometer, you think he would be offered the same at four years’ credit? He would not have credit for a day, nor be allowed to put it in his pocket till he had paid the money.

“The case is this:—You and I belong to a highly respectable college. Nearly all the men here are presumed to succeed to an independent fortune. The very name of such a college as this is enough to satisfy a tradesman that we may be safely trusted to some small amount without inquiry. This, however, is not the case with the men of all colleges. The same order which will be executed most readily for Wyndham Jones of Christchurch will be refused, unless some tutor will be answerable for its payment, to David Jones of Jesus. Not but the one may be as worthy of credit as the other, but because the sons of Welsh gentlemen have smaller incomes than ourselves, and therefore they would excite suspicion if they were not more cautious of incurring debts.”

“But why have not the tradesmen been dunning Cotton and Langworthy—they owe double as much as I do?”

“For two reasons. They are the sons of richer men. Cotton would be trusted to any extent. His father’s estates are in this county. His elder brother was here before him. He kept his hunters, and dashed away; and within a year after his degree he walked round the town with a cheque book in his hand, and as he paid money to the extent of every man’s claim, he seemed quite delighted to think of the ease with which he could do it. Still, neither he nor Cotton, junior, are likely men to throw money idly away. Their practice has been to collect their accounts, and examine them regularly every term.”

(To be continued.)

SIR JOHN MILLAIS AND HIS PICTURES.

THE exhibition of the pictures of Sir John Millais at the Grosvenor Gallery has drawn renewed public attention to this artist, one of the most popular, if not *the* most popular of the contemporary British school. A collection embracing one hundred and thirty of the painter's best known works in oil and a fair number of pen and ink drawings, may be truly pronounced as representative, embracing as it farther does the whole period of his activity, from the year 1848 to the year 1885; in short, presenting nearly forty years' result of honest, earnest work, in which his style has developed and changed not a little. The careful observer, however, will not fail to note that this change is what all change should be, a consistent evolution, and that there is no real contradiction between Millais, the Pre-Raphaelite (as Pre-Raphaelitism was evinced in him), and Millais the fashionable portrait painter, the delineator of childhood, the artist whose strength lies in technical skill and in a rare power to transcribe faithfully the object before him.

John Everett Millais, notwithstanding his French surname, is the most characteristically English painter that the contemporary art-world has to show. Indeed he is the fullest expression of our national artistic proclivities, which lean rather towards the representation of the actual and present than towards the monumental and imaginative. A bold, masculine nature, of the paste from which men of action, soldiers or sportsmen, rather than artists are fashioned, his temperament is expressed in his work by means of a robust sincerity, a disregard of convention, a directness of pictorial utterance that places him at the opposite pole of art to the President of the Royal Academy. Sir Frederick Leighton's work represents the learned culture and æsthetic bent of our country and time; that of Millais depicts its prose and average intelligence. Millais is an eminently modern artist, who finds rather than creates, expresses rather than idealizes; a great unflinching master, but neither a poet nor an idealist. But it will perhaps be most interesting if we survey the exhibition of his pictures somewhat chronologically, not losing hold, at the same time, of the biographical thread. We shall then best understand the works and the man; the one helping to elucidate the other.

John Everett Millais was born on June 8th, 1829, at the seaport town of Southampton, the son of a Jersey officer, whence his French cognomen. He was extraordinarily precocious with the

use of his pencil, and when in 1835 the family moved their residence to Dinan in Brittany, young Millais's sketches of the French officers stationed in the town were the talk and wonder of the place. His parents, recognizing his marked talents, thought it well to have advice about his future, and to this end, when the boy was eight years old, they took him to London to consult with the then President of the Academy what they should do about their infant prodigy. Sir Martin Shee was a man who had not found art a successful career, and, as a rule, he discouraged all aspirants to his profession. But when the untutored efforts of little Millais were put before him he at once recognized their uncommon ability. "The parents of a child so gifted," he said to Mr. and Mrs. Millais, "should do all in their power to help the cultivation of his faculties and to speed him on the career for which Nature has evidently intended him." His parents, following the advice thus authoritatively given, at once placed their boy in an academy, and Millais may boast that he is, perhaps, of contemporary painters, the one who took up his profession at the tenderest age. At nine he won the silver medal of the Society of Arts, at thirteen one for drawing from the antique. Indeed, before he was sixteen he had carried off every academic prize for which he had competed. In 1846, when barely seventeen, he exhibited his first picture, which was pronounced in a contemporary French criticism as on a level with the best historical work of the year. The theme was "The Capture of the Inca by Pizarro." Its treatment showed a knowledge of composition and effect that was more than creditable considering the youth of the artist, and what was perhaps yet more remarkable was that the last adjective one would have applied to it was immature. As an English writer has well said, "One might rather take it for a spirited and successful work of a ripe painter of that time when English art was somewhat conventional and not too particular about minute historical accuracy." His next pictures, "The Widow's Mite" and "Elgiva," also attracted notice, but as yet they showed no signs of that rebellion against established modes of procedure that was soon after to make Millais's name one of a school that for long had to bear many attacks of obloquy and derision, and which to this day has its detractors and defenders, who dispute its demerits and merits with acrimony and heat. Of these early pictures there is one at the Grosvenor Gallery representing Mr. Wyatt, a frame-maker and print-seller of Oxford Street, with his grandchild. It is a picture brilliant in colouring, careful in finish, with a certain Dutch-doll-like stiffness about it that is rather funny to note, and is a good example of the artist's early literalism.

It was as a pronounced Pre-Raphaelite that Millais next appeared before the public. This revolt against the accepted doctrines and practices of the contemporary painters, which was designated under the name of Pre-Raphaelitism, occurred in 1848,

a year in which revolution of every kind seems to have been in the air. Seven young men, poets, painters, and sculptors, had formed themselves into a species of *cénacle* for the discussion of art theories, under the presidency of the mediævally-inclined poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Like the French romanticists of 1830, their union was a protest and a reaction against what had grown lifeless convention in art and poetry. Their theories were based upon efforts after truth, a desire that art should aim above all things at moral good, in contradistinction to the doctrine of art for art, and that in painting nothing should be scamped or generalized that could be expressed in complete detail. Thus an artist might select his model, but that model chosen, he must not modify its traits but depict them precisely as Nature had formed them. It is easy to see into what aberrations, not to say absurdities, this creed carried out to the letter led its adherents, and the best proof of its inefficiency is evinced by the fact that of the original seven members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, as they called themselves, only two (Holman Hunt and Rossetti) have remained faithful to the laws formulated by the school, while its later adherents have departed from its dicta in many respects, and in none more, perhaps, than in its didactic leanings. Still it must not be ignored that the movement, for all its exaggeration and youthful absurdity, was of great value in arousing the English art of its day from a deplorable condition of stagnation and flaccidity. For Millais it was useful in that it liberated him from the conventionalities into which his pictures of '48 showed a danger of sinking, it fostered his gift of imitating the thing that was before him, and directed him towards that study of Nature which he has turned to such good account. He gradually shook off the fallacies of the school, he retained all it had taught him of good. At the best the main spiritual note of the school had been to him an acquired and secondary matter. His straightforward and non-complex intellect did not fall in with the subtle and often hyper-critical ideas of his colleagues, with whom his only real point of contact was their earnest interest in severe labour.

Four pictures, all more or less noteworthy, were the contributions of Millais while actually a member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, and entitled to sign his work with their cypher. All four are at the Grosvenor Gallery. The first is an illustration of Keats' paraphrase of Boccaccio's story of "Isabella and the Pot of Basil." The moment chosen by Millais is that when the cruel brothers surprise the feelings of the lovers, betrayed while sitting side by side at the household dinner.

I.

"Fair Isabel, poor simple Isabel!
Lorenzo, a young palmer in Love's eye!
They could not in the self-same mansion dwell
Without some stir of heart, some malady;

They could not sit at meals but feel how well
 It soothed each to be the other by;
 They could not sure beneath the same roof sleep,
 But to each other dream, and nightly weep."

• • * • *

XXI

"These brethren having found by many signs
 What love Lorenzo for their sister had,
 And how she loved him too, each unconfinest
 His bitter thoughts to other, well-nigh mad
 That he, the servant of their trade designs,
 Should in their sister's love be blithe and glad,
 When 'twas their plan to coax her by degrees
 To some high noble and his olive trees."

The composition affects the *naïveté*, the stiffness of early Italian schools; we see all the figures as they sit each side of a long narrow table, just as they might really have sat. It is a *tour de force* in its way, as the difficulty of representing a dozen people sitting at a table nearly at right angles to the onlooker is stupendous, but an agreeable picture it is not. There is no striving after beauty of effect in composition in the whole canvas, and dramatically it is a failure, although it shows command over a wide range of human expression. Yet for brushwork and colour Millais has not surpassed this picture even at his best. It is interesting to learn that the heads are all portraits of persons less or more famous. That every one was painted from a different model was, in those days, a remarkable and entirely Pre-Raphaelite fact. Mr. William Rossetti sat for Lorenzo. The artist's father sat for the man [wiping his lips with a napkin. It is Dante Gabriel Rossetti who is drinking hastily with a glass at his lips. The man whose profile appears between the face of the watching brother and his wine glass is Mr. F. G. Stephens, the art critic of the "Athenæum," and the writer of the Grosvenor Gallery catalogue.

The other works painted in the strictly Pre-Raphaelite manner are "The Woodman's Daughter," "Ferdinand lured by Ariel," and "Christ in the House of His Parents." All three canvases called forth much critical indignation, while in the case of the last, the narrow-minded, pharisaical public opinion of the day branded it as little short of irreverent and irreligious. This was no less absurd than the inhibition to-day of Vereschagin's picture on much the same theme by the Archbishop of Vienna. Millais's picture represents a Jewish carpenter's shop in which Joseph and his apprentices are depicted as plying their trade surrounded by the whole family. The young Jesus, a boy of some eight summers, has wounded his hand with a nail and flies to his mother for sympathy; Joseph and the aged Anne look on in deep concern for the child's sufferings. While aiming at accuracy of historical detail in respect of avoiding the conventional halos or nimbus

around the figures reputed sacred, Millais erred in fidelity in respect of choosing English and not Semitic models to stand for his figures. This causes his work to differ notably in truth of presentment from the work of Vereschagin and Munkacsy, and allies his sacred art rather to the school of Rembrandt and Paolo Veronese. Truth to reality is demanded to-day as much of the artist who would paint sacred subjects as of him that paints historical. And this leaning towards accuracy is not one to be deprecated, and may have unlooked for effects in liberating humanity from the myths with which it has been too long plied to its intellectual injury. Millais himself has learnt to recognize his early error. It is really curious to realize, standing before the picture, how it could have raised such an outcry. During its exhibition, as the artist told the present writer, Mr. and Mrs. Millais besought their son, then just twenty, to abandon painting for ever, rather than to put his head into such a hornet's nest. The very Protestantism, for such it is, of this picture was denounced as Romanism. The work was painted on a commission for a well-known dealer, the price being £250; in those days a very great sum for a work by a young man. It remained, owing to the terror of the criticisms, unsold for several years in this dealer's possession; but he, nevertheless, was always a faithful advocate for his "client," the artist.

The "Ferdinand," despite the fine expression in the Prince's face, despite extreme care in the drawing of the foliage, the painting of the accessories, displeased, and not wholly unjustly, by its crudity of colour and its misconception of that most exquisite of Shakespeare's creations, the tricky Ariel. Under Millais's brush the elvish boy becomes an ugly green goblin and the "delicate poetry of the whole situation" has "vanished into thin air." This picture was painted for £100; when it was finished, the gentleman who had commissioned it, to Millais's intense mortification and dismay, would not hear of having such a work. Not long afterwards a visitor came to the studio at No. 83 (now 7) Gower Street. Hearing what had happened and judging for himself, he asked for a piece of paper "to write a note on." He wrote a cheque for £150 and became the owner of "Ferdinand." This was Mr. Richard Ellison of Subbrooke Holm, who gave a noble collection of drawings to the South Kensington Museum. "The Woodman's Daughter" is a positive *reductio ad absurdum* of the central theory of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood that what is common in nature is good enough for art. Millais must, one would think, have almost gone out of his way to find so ugly and uninteresting a child as his model. It is true that the poem by Mr. Coventry Patmore to which the picture was an illustration, spoke of the child as plain; but why choose such a poem for illustration is the obvious criticism. These, however, proved Millais's last efforts in the allegorical and didactic line, though

not his last efforts in the domain of the ugly and absolutely uninteresting. It is a most curious fact about this artist that at times he will miss entirely the sentiment or point of a scene, will go blankly wrong in choice of theme, yet at other times no one can seize the charm of a situation with keener intuition.

But to return to the chronological order of Millais's development. There is yet another early picture by the artist in the Grosvenor Gallery, namely, "The Return of the Dove to the Ark." It seems that when this canvas was first exhibited all the critics passed it over in silence. The work is simply comic in its uncompromising ugliness. The young ladies in the Ark must certainly have resembled English workhouse girls if these two, who caress a dove, are to be taken as typical specimens.

A great divergence was marked with the year 1852, when the artist made his first popular hit with "The Huguenot," the couple of lovers, familiar wherever the name of Millais is known, who meet in a secret spot to bid each other a last sad farewell on the eve of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Loving honour even more than his lady love, the lover refuses to let her bind round his arm the white scarf that would have saved him from murder, since it would have let him pass as a Catholic. In this picture there was nothing ugly or absurd, and though a little stiff and ungraceful the figures are full of feeling, and the Pre-Raphaelite peculiarities of each accessory detail, though not yet wholly swamped, are no longer painted and exaggerated for their own sakes, but exist as a means to an end.

Whether it was the abuse with which the Pre-Raphaelite pictures were greeted (mingled of course with unstinted praise from adherents of the Pre-Raphaelite school), or whether it was that Millais himself recognized that his strength did not lie in realizing visions of the unseen, it is certain that the pictures of the following year showed a hesitancy and change of theme and treatment. When "A Huguenot" was first hung at the Royal Academy crowds stood before it all day long. It had clothed the old feelings of men in a new garment and its pathos found almost universal acceptance. This was the picture which brought Millais to the height of his reputation. Nevertheless, even "A Huguenot" did not silence all challengers; thus there were critics who said that the man's arm could not reach so far round the lady's neck. This picture, which has not been seen in the original since its first exhibition, owing to an absurd clause in the will of the owner that it should never be taken down from the walls on which it hung, is as brilliant and fresh to-day as on the day it was first painted—a criticism that cannot be passed on much of the artist's later work. This is attributable chiefly to the fact that, like all Millais's earlier examples, it was painted mainly with copal as a vehicle and *a primo*, or, as artists say, "at once." Few tamperings with each day's work being admitted, each portion remains

as that day left it. This is a very instructive fact for painters who wish their works to endure.

The Huguenot group was so successful that it led to repetitions of the central idea, producing "The Black Brunswicker," "The Proscribed Royalist," and "Effie Deans," all three at the Grosvenor Gallery; the "Bride of Lammermoor," in the possession of the late Mr. Vanderbilt, and "The Escape of a Heretic." In all these, as well as in other pictures by the artist, is embodied what he holds as one of his main principles, namely, to leave the drama unfinished, to depict his incident while the danger is imminent but has not yet overwhelmed its victims. Another essential characteristic of his art, according to his own explanation, is his treatment of woman as a thing to be loved. "It is only since Watteau and Gainsborough," he says, "that woman has won her right place in art. The Dutch had no love for women. The Italians were as bad. The women's pictures of Titian, Raphael, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Velasquez, are magnificent as works of art; but who would care to kiss such women? Watteau, Gainsborough, and Reynolds were needed to show us how to do justice to woman and to reflect her sweetness." While by no means prepared to endorse the artist's dictum, which is too absolute for truth and betrays a certain ignorance of Italian art, yet the utterance is of interest as being his opinion.

"The Huguenot" and its immediate successors showed that Millais had learnt to distinguish between what is passing and what is permanent in effect and appearance, and hence he naturally liberated himself from the thrall of the Pre-Raphaelite school. There was still a touch of perverseness in his rendering of "The Death of Ophelia," where as much, if not more, attention is bestowed upon the weedy ditch as on the hapless maiden who floats along it, singing her last song. It is interesting to know that the face was painted from the model Miss Siddal, who afterwards became Mrs. D. G. Rossetti, and whose face is familiar to us in her husband's works. Another later relapse into the eccentric is the "Sir Isumbras at the Ford," also exhibited. It recalls to us the now very rare skit made at the time, entitled "A Nightmare," and believed to be the work of Mr. F. Sandys, a distinguished brother artist. It generally reproduced the work in a ludicrous manner, and showed the painter while in the act of crossing the ford on the back of a loud-braying ass, which bears the features of Mr. Ruskin. Seated on the front of the saddle, in the place of one of the woodcutter's children, Mr. Dante G. Rossetti is supported by the mighty hands of the steel-clad knight. Clinging round the waist of the champion is a quaint mannikin, with a sheaf of painter's brushes slung at his back instead of the sticks of the original figure, meant for Mr. W. Holman Hunt. The intention of the designer of this satire was to suggest the position of the old masters and the modern critics at this period. On the

bank of the river are three distant figures of Michael Angelo, Titian, and Raphael. The first stands with his face averted and his arms folded, while Titian and Raphael kneel in front of him, looking towards the animal and his freight. A small scroll proceeds from the ass's mouth, with the legend "*Orate pro nobis.*" Instead of his sheathed sword an artist's mahl-stick was suspended to the girdle of Millais, and by the side of this hung a bunch of peacocks' feathers and a large paste pot, inscribed "P. R. B." This print referred to the original articles of the Pre-Raphaelite faith, and to the championship of the author of "*Modern Painters.*" It was after the exhibition of the "*Order of Release,*" one of the most masculine pieces of work turned out by the painter, that (in 1854) Millais was elected an Associate of the Academy, to become later, in 1863, a full Academician. With the exception of Lawrence, he is the youngest artist ever admitted into the sacred circle. It had its usual sobering effect. More and more Millais inclined in his subjects towards the familiar, the domestic, the anecdotic, and though for a while there remained a love for romantic themes, yet these were usually of a kind where the sentiment is cheap, obvious, or well-worn. Millais is far greater as a craftsman than as a thinker or creator. Were his inventive powers as considerable as his technical skill, his mastery over colour, he would indeed be the greatest artist the English school has ever produced.

In his picture "*Autumn Leaves,*" exhibited in 1856, also at the Grosvenor Gallery, Millais first attempted work in which landscape took a prominent place. The canvas shows four young girls heaping up withered leaves on a low fire. Behind them is a sunset sky that bathes the distant blue hills and the garden with its rich glow of colour. Of all this beauty the workers are unconscious, and it is this fact that lends a spiritual note to the picture, a note that many observers and critics of the time missed, in that it was modified, if not to a certain extent obscured, by the lack of beauty in the girls who occupy the foreground. In this work was well seen the advance in Millais's style. Instead of each leaf being painted with painful minuteness, as would have been the case earlier, they are here given with great truth and force, but with a treatment that was general and with work that was more rapid. This increase of rapidity was to become Millais's bane. After having got over his early love of detail his danger grew to be haste, until of late years his work has at times been so blotchy and scamped that only seen at a distance does it make its proper effect, and even here careless treatment of minor parts, such as hands and draperies, offend the eye and make us marvel at the entire and subversive change from 1848 to 1884. But until about 1864 he still oscillated between careful finish and rapid effect. To the former class belongs his famous "*Eve of St. Agnes,*" an illustration of Keats' poem of the maiden who hopes to see her

lover in a dream on the festival of this virgin martyr. This picture, which laid itself open to criticism for awkwardness and defiance of grace in drapery, is full of beauty, truth, and skill in the matter of light. The effect of the moonshine falling through the stained glass windows that throw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast is splendid for subtlety and harmony of treatment. The room as painted was found at Knole House, Kent, and put to canvas in that historic mansion. To the series of romantic themes belongs also a "Joan of Arc." In this work Millais made clearly evident the mastery over mingled expression that has made him such a proficient in portrait painting. The Maid's look of mingled pain, doubt, and ecstasy of faith is well conceived. Unfortunately the very excellence with which the armour is painted somewhat diverts attention from the head. Of other successful pictures of an inventive nature at the Grosvenor Gallery, must be named that charming work "A Flood," "The Boyhood of Raleigh," "The North-west Passage," "The Princes in the Tower," and "The Princess Elizabeth in Prison at St. James'." "A Flood" shows a piece of country when under water, with a turbid stream rushing among trees, haystacks, and hedgerows. A sturdy baby who has been floated in his cradle from out his mother's garden, where all else has gone to wreck, lies ensconced safely among his bed-clothes, plays with his own fingers, and seems none the worse for his perilous voyage. He unconsciously goes on his way, delighted, as his ark approaches a tree where the goldfinches flutter in the boughs which glitter with drops of rain. His fellow passenger, a lively black kitten, is not nearly so happy and mews piteously as he sits on the edge of the cradle. The warm pale olive tint of the wintry atmosphere, true as it is to the effect of an autumnal evening, supplies a great charm to this picture. "The Boyhood of Raleigh" is full of open air and sunlight. It narrates how an old adventurer of the Spanish Main fills the youthful dreams of little Raleigh with stories of bold adventure of El Dorado, of Aztecs, and of Incas. "The North-west Passage" also deals with the spirit of naval daring, representing an old mariner who grows excited over a tale of the North Pole search that a fair girl beside him reads aloud. The picture is especially remarkable for its admirable treatment of the textures and surfaces of the accessories, where the happy mean between slavish imitation and careless suggestiveness is absolutely found. The head of the old seaman was painted from Trelawney, the friend of Byron and Shelley, the Philhellene who continued to fight for the Greeks after the death of Byron. "The Princes" and "The Princess" are pendant works. The Princes are not depicted as in the famous picture by Delaroche as crouching timidly upon their bed, but as standing fearful and anxious at the top of a staircase in the Tower, awaiting the approach of a murderer or a rescuer. The incarcerated Princess is the luckless daughter of Charles I. who died at the

early age of fifteen, after more than half her life had been spent in captivity. There is a sweet pathos and dignity in the face and attitude of the young girl, who is depicted in the last stage of the wearing illness induced by her confinement. She is represented as in the act of writing to implore Parliament not to deprive her of her faithful servants. With regard to this picture there is an interesting little point. The Princess is painted seated near a cabinet. This piece of furniture is now in the possession of Sir John Millais, who bought it in ignorance that it formerly belonged to Theobalds, the favourite house of James I. and had probably been in the possession of the latter's successor, the Princess's father. An engraving, discovered after the relic became Sir John's property, revealed its history.

The years 1863 and 1870 mark two periods in Millais's art and choice of themes. The former date saw the first of that series of child pictures which places the painter on a level with Sir Joshua Reynolds as a depicter of all that is sweetest and loveliest in humanity. "My First Sermon" was the forerunner of what was to become a long series of popular successes, in which the slightest incident in child-life is taken advantage of to make a picture, a form of art unfortunately dealt with to excess by the artist, and which has become the progenitor of a whole class of such nursery pictures from the brushes of our younger painters. Pretty enough in themselves, they grow nauseous by repetition, owing to their inherent slighness and triteness of theme. But when "My First Sermon" was exhibited the idea was new, and very attractive was the little maiden who sits demurely quiet in the family pew, gazing with awe and wonder at the man who is holding forth in the pulpit. This is at the Grosvenor, and so is "My Second Sermon," its sequel, painted in consequence of the great popularity of that work, and exhibited in the year following. The same child, wearing the same red cloak, grey hat, red stockings and warm muff as before, sits in the old pew. The bright, self-possessed little maiden has fallen asleep with perfect innocence and goodwill; thus the effect of the preacher's discourse is perfectly expressed. In the gallery, too, is that other delicious and unaffected picture of child-life, "The Minuet," a little girl treading the stately measure with conscientious painstaking. It is easy to see from the painter's treatment of these fancy children, and also from his child portraits, that he is in tender sympathy with all that is lovely in childhood. As for "Caller Herrin"—the fisherman's young daughter, resting on her homeward way, seated on a wooded bank near the shore and looking out to the sea, with her basket by her side containing a mass of bright silver herrings intended for the keynote of the colouring of the picture, which comprises the grey sky, and the girl's silvery bluish garments—that picture will be remembered and loved by art connoisseurs so long as it retains the colour on its canvas. It is quite possible that Millais may, in the future, share

with Sir Joshua Reynolds the fame of the painter of English childhood.

As Millais advanced in years he discerned more and more clearly that his strength lay in contact with realities. It is this that makes his portraits so excellent. They are healthy, vigorous and direct presentments, showing that close and keen observation which is his characteristic. Some of them will remain as historical documents to illustrate nineteenth century English history. First and foremost to that category belong two portraits of Mr. Gladstone, both at the Grosvenor Gallery, painted at different periods of his life. In the first, Gladstone is represented as standing, dressed in plain black, his face thoughtful and dreamy; it is carried out in that peculiarly quiet and unaffected style which Millais always adopts when he has for his subject a man of strong individual character. In the second, Gladstone is seated, clad in the bright scarlet Doctor of Laws robes of the Oxford University. Here his face is militant and watchful. Millais has caught the curious mode in which the Premier lifts up his eye when he addresses a person. "An eye like Mars, to threaten and command," when it so pleases its owner. Under that fierce look mankind would have to cower, did not the mouth betray sensitiveness and weakness of determination. All Gladstone's faults and all his great qualities are summed up in masterly mode in this portrait. The painting of the scarlet and pink robes, as ugly as they are *voyant*, is a technical masterpiece. Vigorous, too, is the Sir Henry Thompson and the Sir James Paget; characteristic the Ruskin and the Thomas Carlyle. In his presentment of John Bright, Millais has idealized all that is sturdy and bold in the great Radical's leonine head, while in his portrait of Disraeli, he has made clearly evident, without exaggeration, the courageous, self-concentrated character of the statesman. In Lord Salisbury, we see intellectual power and resolution of character well written on his face. In his portraits of women, Millais is unequal; they are often as remarkable for life and spirit as those of his male models, as, witness the Mrs. Jopling; but at times they are apt to be overdressed, and the human element is swamped by the finery. Still, even this may be a true presentment did we know the original, but it spoils the pictures as works of true art.

It was in 1871 Millais exhibited his first landscape, pure and simple. This, the "Chill October," remains his best effort in that branch, a department of art in which he was to prove as direct and honest as in his portraits. His landscapes are transcripts of the outer world, recorded by an eye that sees with truth and strenuous purpose, whose sentiment is only that which is really present and which the spectator puts in from his own mind, which is not given to him ready made by the painter. They are not idealizations but realizations. Not numerous, inspired by stern

Scotch scenery, they are all admirable. Of the "Cuckoo" an excellent story is told. It seems that when the picture was exhibited in Birmingham, the gallery was opened in the evening to the labouring class. A group of pitmen gathered round the landscape and one of them commended the work highly to his mates. "Them flowers," he said, "are just alive, and that pool of water is natural and so is the tree; but——" here he paused and looked round at his friends, and then again at the picture, "but, where on earth is the cuckoo?"

In "Chill October" Millais has shown himself possessed of more poetical feeling than he usually exhibits. It exquisitely realizes Mr. Allingham's word-picture:

"What saith the river to the rushes grey,
Rushes sadly bending,
River slowly wending?
It is near the closing of the day.
Near the night—life and light
For ever, ever fled away."

The picture is more or less familiar to the public, thanks to an excellent etching; but less familiar and equally poetic in feeling is the canvas named after the lines by Tennyson, in his "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," "That Tower of Strength which stood Foursquare to all the Winds that blew." It is a landscape representing Urquhart Castle, a fortress high on a promontory of Loch Ness, under an effect of straining wind and drifting rain, and in front of a world of vapours which race between us and the mountain sides, and break like water on a shore. The silvery, ashy reflections of the clouds on the troubled waters of the lake are broken by gleams of light. The sentiment of the picture is distinct in the shattered but still stalwart tower, the battlements strongly marked against the grey sky, which is filled with yellow light, while the walls have but a pale reflection on them, which makes them sterner than ever. The wind, which is not strong enough to raise the surface of the lake in waves, catches enough of the water to make wavelets and ripples, which chafe and fret rather than fall rhythmically, thus intensifying the pathos of the scene.

Altogether, this collection of Millais's pictures at the Grosvenor Gallery is by no means the least interesting and valuable of the various shows illustrating the rise and growth of modern art, got together under the liberal ægis of Sir Coutts Lindsay and his able *aide-de-camp*, Mr. Comyns Carr. Warm thanks are due to both these gentlemen for the treat afforded to the public, as also to the owners of the different pictures who have so generously lent them for exhibition.

THE MOUSE'S RANSOM.

SÁLIH was an Arab boy, who frequented the harbour of Suez, or Suais, and earned a precarious living by renting that much enduring beast, an Egyptian donkey, from his owner; having liberty, for the consideration of about twopence per diem, to exercise the devoted animal's legs and back to his (Sálih's) heart's content, so long as those indispensable portions of the animal should not be seriously damaged. Though the first part of the contract was not always carried out with scrupulous exactitude, the latter certainly was; and on days when a Peninsular and Oriental Co.'s steamer, with a good cargo of passengers, was delayed an hour or two longer than usual, owing to obstructions in the canal, the donkey in question was persuaded, by screams, curses and thwacks, to proceed from the quay to the hotel and back, with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, an almost incalculable number of times. As these, the principal objects of interest in Suez, are about four miles apart, it will be perceived that the unwillingly industrious animal earned his provender (such as it was) tolerably well. In accordance with the usual custom of the genus donkey-boy, the ass was dignified with the name of a European celebrity, and answered to the title of "General Booth." On lucky days, Sálih managed to extract considerable sums from confiding passengers fresh from England, whom he persuaded to take an airing on General Booth. The General was naturally vivacious, and possessed of a good stride, a most valuable quality in the frequent donkey-races which passengers, tired of many days on a ship's deck, were wont to indulge in on landing. Besides, he was not particularly wicked, as is often the case with these much-provoked beasts; he was never known to drop suddenly, as though shot dead, just when at his highest speed, or to turn a summerset in the middle of a crowded street—accomplishments possessed by but too many of his brethren. "Oh, no," as Sálih was wont to assure passengers in broken English, "General Booth always pious."

Now Sálih lived in a little hut, in one of the back streets of Suez, in company with his mother and two or three small brothers and sisters. His father was dead, and the widow had little to live on but the earnings of her son. She herself was almost completely blind from that ophthalmia which is one of the plagues of Egypt, and could do little but plait rush-mats and small baskets. She

had never been able to afford to send Sálîh to school; so that young gentleman remained in ignorance, not however blissful. He possessed the natural quickness of the Arab, and secretly regretted his inability to read, write, and use those strange marks by which the clerks at the quay found out all about the numbers and quantities of articles. He had also a hankering to be "muaddab," *i.e.*, knowing in poetry and rhetoric, disputations regarding which he often overheard in the Sûk, or market-place of Suez, when loitering there in the cool of the evening after sunset, the time when Arabs sit out in the street and discourse of things in general. As time went on his yearning after knowledge increased, and he, one day when unusually flush of cash, bought an old Kurán, at the mysterious characters of which he would gaze with admiration and astonishment for hours together, whenever the moon was bright enough. He was too poor to indulge in oil for reading purposes. If he could but afford a few lessons in reading! Alas! there was no one among his own class who knew more than himself, and how could he find the time and the money for school? He would sometimes, when driving his donkey to and fro, loiter for a minute or two at the corner of the street where there was a school. Inside squatted the little scholars on the floor, each with his book, his reed-pen, and his small bottle of thick ink. The master sat cross-legged at the top of the room, with (as it seemed to Sálîh) a mighty array of books around him. Texts from the Kurán ornamented the walls, texts written in every variety of Arabic caligraphy, that most artistic effort of scribes. Sálîh's eyes lingered longingly on those wonderful and sacred curves, on which local religious art had expended all its powers. Could he but learn to write like that! And then to listen to the boys reading each his appointed task, in such an easy fluent manner, as though the book were inside him, not outside; a familiar part of himself, not a something foreign and mysterious! And the noble sound, too, of the ancient and holy words, so different to *his* Arabic! Then he would stir up his donkey, and go on his way sighing.

When the great steamers landed their many passengers, and these lounged about the streets or by the canal, many of them, he saw, carried books in their pockets, and took them out to read for amusement when they had nothing else to do. A gentleman in spectacles was one day thrown from General Booth's back, owing to the snapping of the girths when that quadruped was just entering the courtyard of the hotel at full speed. Out of the pockets of the rider flew two books and a newspaper; and the books had green and red bindings, and pretty paintings on their outsides, while the newspaper was full of pictures of men and women, and towns and ships. Wonderful to think that such beautiful things were made among the Inglíz, only to amuse them! Yes, it must be the knowledge they possessed that made them rich and powerful;

so powerful that he had heard it said that great Sultans were among their servants! Ah! knowledge was a fine thing! but how to get it? It lived in books locked up securely from all who had not the key, the art of reading with understanding.

Now, one evening, when the moon was high and bright, Sálîh sat in his mother's hut with the Kurán in his hand, looking wistfully at the long lines of well-ordered letters grouped into larger or smaller bands of words in the great army of each page, just like the soldiers who sometimes exercised on the sands outside the town. His mother and the other children were asleep, and he was in sole possession of the little outer room. He had been meditating sadly on the apparent impossibility of obtaining an education, and had fallen into a kind of doze, when his attention was aroused by the proceedings of two mice which were perambulating the floor inspecting every square inch in search of some minute particle of edible matter, no very easy thing to discover in that poverty-stricken abode. There was a kind of impudence about these mice, which he had never observed in others of their species, and which fascinated him in spite of the mournful thoughts which held possession of his mind. They marched round him (for he remained motionless) and sniffed at the hem of his dirty garment, as though desirous of making his acquaintance. It happened that close by his side lay a small brass basin commonly used for some domestic purpose. Watching his opportunity, he overturned this basin so quickly and cleverly, that one of the mice was caught beneath it, imprisoned in the brazen trap. The other fled, but soon returned and commenced making vigorous assaults upon the strange dome which had descended so rapidly on its comrade. Finding this in vain, it retreated to its hole.

It came forth again after an absence of a few moments, holding something in its mouth, the something was heavy for the mouse appeared to support it with difficulty; it was round too, and glittered slightly when the moonbeams fell upon it. Up to the side of the basin, remote from Sálîh, advanced the mouse with its burden, which it deposited on the floor, and then retreated a short distance. Halting a yard or two off, it sat up and looked intently at the boy.

Sálîh reached out his hand and picked up the object which the mouse had brought. It was—yes—there could be no doubt, it was—a piece of gold, an ancient coin, a *dínár* of the old Sultans of Egypt who had reigned before the Turks were heard of. The mouse intended it as a ransom for its imprisoned friend.

There is a belief very prevalent among Orientals, that any extraordinary boldness on the part of mice is a sure sign of their possessing a treasure of some sort. Capital is supposed to confer upon them the same independence of demeanour which it does upon human beings. These mice had displayed extraordinary impudence in their approach of him, therefore Sálîh was sure there

must be more money in their hoard than the single *dínár* which had been produced. He therefore replaced the coin where the mouse had laid it, and shook his head, in order to convey to the expectant animal that more must be forthcoming before a release could be granted to the captive.

After waiting a little, the mouse retired with a disappointed air, but reappeared quickly with another *dínár*, similar to the first, in its mouth. This it deposited on the floor by the other, and sat up in a suppliant attitude, as though asking for pity and consideration. The boy's cupidity and hope now began to rise together, and he had no thought of liberating his very profitable prisoner until perfectly sure that he had exacted the uttermost farthing which the pair could command. So he continued to maintain a stern and unyielding countenance, on which the petitioner could perceive no sign of compassion.

A third journey to the hole now took place, and a third coin was produced. The same dumb show was presented, and the piece proceeded as before between the two actors. Sometimes the mouse would sit for a longer space than at others, in the hope, apparently, that the extortionate youth would either pity, or become wearied with long waiting; but finding these expectations disappointed, it would again return to the treasure-house for another *dínár*. *Sálih*, when telling the story afterwards, asserted that its visage lengthened perceptibly with each journey it took. The floor was soon strewed with gold pieces, the original glittering hue of which had been dimmed by long neglect, and the deposits of centuries of mould; here and there though, brilliant flashes came from those parts of them which had been clawed by the mice when they turned over, and doubtless counted, their hoard.

When twenty-five separate journeys had been made to the treasury, and twenty-five *dínárs* exhibited to the delighted gaze of *Sálih*, the mouse departed and reappeared with—no coin, but an old leather bag or purse. Bringing this to a part of the floor where the moonbeams shone brightest, it carefully turned the receptacle inside out. There was nothing within. The bag was evidently the original house of the *dínárs* strewed around, and it was also clear that no more were forthcoming; the poor mouse was bankrupt; and with a touching air of resignation, it seated itself by the empty purse, and looked beseechingly at the master of the situation.

That young gentleman saw that the bottom of the poor creature's pocket, so to speak, was reached. It had given its all for its companion's freedom. The sex of the animal was not distinguishable; it might be a bridegroom, imploring for the release of his captive bride—it might be a wife, begging for her husband's liberty. In any case, it had deserved well of *Sálih*; and fully sensible of this fact, he raised the brazen basin, and set free the palpitating little prisoner, which fled immediately, with the utmost

precipitancy, rattling the coins in its flight to join its partner. Both lost no time in disappearing into the hole.

When all was quiet again, the boy sat as one entranced. Could the scene he had witnessed and taken part in be a reality? Was it not rather one of those deluding dreams which, he had heard, often came to torment the longing and mock the desirous? But there lay the gold on the floor. Yes, but perhaps he was still dreaming. He pinched himself once or twice to make sure that this was not the case. No, he was wide-awake, there could be no doubt about that; so he got up and clutched the *dinárs* with a feverish hand. He had never seen so many gold pieces together before; and indeed had seldom seen any at all. Many times did he pick up each and turn it over, with its mysterious legend and royal cypher; and when he was at last convinced that he was *bonâ-fide* master of twenty-five good, solid, heavy *dinárs*, he could keep his own counsel no longer, and called to his mother.

The rest of that night and most of the succeeding day was spent in considering what should be done with this miraculously-obtained windfall. At last it was settled that half of it should be spent in improving the external appearance and the internal comforts of their abode; and the other half should be devoted to the commencement of *Sálih's* long longed-for education. Two days afterwards he took his place among the lowest class of that school into which his admiring eyes had so often glanced.

Time has passed since then, and *Sálih* is a man. He is well taught in all the wisdom which the modern Egyptians possess, and may, perhaps, be a Pasha some day. And if you can find him in the bazaar of Suez, he will perhaps give you in his own words this story of the Mouse's Ransom.

WHAT IS DACOITY ?

THERE are certain words which go in couples so currently that the average reader, speaker, or listener seldom thinks of challenging them for the purpose of distinction. Such pairs of words are to be found in the odour of sanctity, as religion and piety; in the gracious category of the *belles lettres*, as fancy and imagination, wit and humour; in the sphere of profanity, as cursing and swearing; and in the lowest abyss of dishonour and cruelty, as Thuggee and Dacoity.

The origin of Thuggee is lost in fable and obscurity. The Thugs themselves refer it to the remotest antiquity, and whether Hindu or Mohammedan, claim to descend from seven Mohammedan clans, which are admitted to be the most ancient and original stock on which all the others have been engrafted, and the principal of which has given its own name as the generic designation at once of the system and the persons who follow it. Colonel Sleeman conjectures that Thuggee owed its existence to the vagrant tribes of Mohammedans who continued to plunder the country long after the invasion of India by the Moghuls and Tartars; and probability thus attaches to the suspicion that the Mohammedans were indeed the first to give a sort of political system to the Thugs; and the seven clans of Ismailis, whose occupation was murder as dreadful as that of the Thugs, nay, when persecuted in the last days of their political existence, have joined themselves to the Hindu Phansigars, and adopting their ritual, have given rise to what it is a comfort to regard as a system as obsolete at the present day as it always was accursed.

The Hindus claim for Thuggee a divine origin in their goddess Bhawani, who, under her name and character of Kali, was the deity worshipped by the Thugs in their professional capacity, whatever might be otherwise their race, caste, sect or religion. Kali is the consort of Siva in his destroying character of Time, and as such she is painted of a black or dark-blue complexion; her relation to Dacoity is so intimate that it is not out of place to devote a few words to her representations in Hindu art.

In pictures she is shown as the personification of eternity, trampling on the body of Siva, or Time, as if to arrogate for her the attributes of the destroyer, the final, remorseless, insatiable, universal annihilator. In one hand she holds the exterminating sword, in another, a human head. A third points downwards, in-

dicating, according to some explanations, the destruction which surrounds her, and the other is raised upwards in allusion to the figure of regeneration of nature by a new creation. Whatever her gestures may import, the image of this goddess is truly horrid, as are the devotional rites performed in her honour. Her wild, dishevelled hair reaching to her feet, her necklace of human heads, the wildness of her countenance, the tongue protruding from her distended mouth, and her position on the body of Siva, altogether convey in blended colours so powerful a personification of the dark character she is intended to portray that, whatever may be thought of their taste, it is impossible to deny to the Hindus full credit for the possession of the most extraordinary and fertile powers of imagination.

The worshippers were as sanguinary as their divinity ; and the Thugs moved about all parts of India in gangs of from ten to two or three hundred men, sacrificing to their tutelary goddess every victim they could seize, and sharing the plunder among themselves. Still they shed no blood, except when forced by circumstances. Murder being their religion, the performance of it required secrecy ; and the instrument of death was a rope or a handkerchief, which could excite no suspicion. They were stranglers, receiving their designation of Thug from a Hindustani word signifying to deceive ; and in the Deccan they were called Phansigars, or noosers.

The country in which the Thugs and the Dacoits exercised their vocation was, until late years, admirably adapted for its prosecution. Whilst still the vast continent of India was portioned out into territories, the possessions of many princes and chieftains, each with supreme and irresponsible power within his own dominions, having most lax and inefficient governments, and at enmity with or jealous of all his neighbours, it may be conceived that no security could exist for the traveller upon the principal roads throughout the vast peninsula. No general league was ever entered into for his security ; no extradition treaties were either extant or projected ; nor could any government, however vigorous, or system of police, however vigilant it might be in one state, possibly extend to all.

Various native rulers had instituted proceedings against the Thugs in different times and places ; and their execution had occasionally taken place in large numbers. Mysore seems to have been a favourite residence with them ; and it was here that the British Government first encountered them soon after 1799. But it was on the discovery of thirty dead bodies in different wells of the Doab, a fertile tract of country in the North-Western Provinces, that Thuggee was brought more prominently to the knowledge of the Calcutta Council, in 1810, when measures were taken for its extermination. About the year 1830 it became known that Thuggee was in active practice all over India ; and a particular

service was formed for the distinct purpose of its suppression. This suppression was effected by the officers of the department, who traced out the members of the gangs by inducing prisoners to become informers. Reformatories were established to reclaim both the children and the adults of this degraded persuasion; and by the year 1860 the gangs had become almost entirely destroyed.

When once the existence of such wretches was ascertained, it was of course impossible that an enlightened government should tolerate them for a moment. They and their system must perish together. The very enormity of their crime brought about its extinction. Monsters and potents of iniquity tend to efface themselves—the world cannot bear them. The rankest offences must be diluted and distributed if they are to be perpetuated. The survival of crime is the survival of the least unfit. Petty larceny may abound where high treason has been obliterated; and society proclaims that, whilst the smaller crimes are to be punished with a view to amendment, murder is to be eradicated by the eradication of its perpetrators. Dacoity was found to be capable of continuance under conditions which to Thuggee would be fatal.

What, then, is Dacoity?

First, as to the word, which is an Anglo-Hindi legal term for a system of robbery by gangs of natives of the country who make it a profession, as the Thugs made assassination a religion. It is derived from the Hindustani word *daka*, the verb being *daka parna*, to plunder. In India Thugs and Dacoits who had been tried and convicted as having belonged to a band of Thug murderers or Dacoits, but who, having made a full confession of their crimes—in some individual cases amounting to the murders of as many as eighty persons—and having denounced their associates, received a conditional pardon. Originally, in the criminal code of India, Dacoity was applied to the armed bands who plundered; but the term, as well as that of Thuggee, came afterwards to be applied to several well-defined classes, which, in times of scarcity, were recruited and reinforced indefinitely by contingents of the unemployed.

Amongst the predatory races were the Budak of the Nepal Terai, and the Dasadh of Behar, who were accustomed to make frequent marauding excursions into Lower Bengal, the Bind of Ghazipur, the Nath, the Ahir, Borā, Kurmi, Gujar, and a host of low castes. In the Punjab, Dacoity generally assumed the form of cattle-lifting. The Meena were active and energetic, and were concerned in most of the Dacoities of Northern India. And in the South-west, the Santal, with his club, long bamboo spear, and terrible battle-axe, often swept down on the plains of Birbhum, Hazaribagh, and adjacent districts; and the flame of their torches or the light of the burning huts gave the first warning of the mischief and the havoc of their raids.

The leaders of a Dacoity band in central India carried with them an axe with a highly-tempered edge, sacred to Bhawani, or Kali, of whom mention has already been made as the tutelary goddess of the Thugs, who worshipped the pickaxe, it may be recorded by way of analogy, with which they interred the bodies of their victims.

The history of Birbhum, which is a British district in the lieutenant-governorship of Bengal, and is at present rather more limited in area than in former times, may be cited as offering a pertinent illustration of the operations of Dacoity when in full vigour or unchecked activity.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the zamindari of Birbhum was formally conferred by Iafar Khan on one Asadulla Pathan, whose family had settled in the country a century earlier, after the fall of the Pathan dynasty of Bengal kings. The estate remained in the family until the British obtained, in 1765, the financial administration of Bengal. It was not till 1787, however, that the Company assumed the direct government of Birbhum. Before that year the local authority was suffered to remain in the hands of the Rajah. Meanwhile bands of marauders from the western highlands, after making frequent predatory incursions, had established themselves in the district. The Rajah could do nothing against these invaders, who formed large permanent camps in strong positions, intercepted the revenues on the way to the treasury, brought the commercial operations of the Company to a standstill, and caused many of the factories to be abandoned. It became absolutely necessary for the English Government to interfere, and the first step in that direction was taken in 1787, when the two border principalities of Birbhum and Bankura were united into one district, a considerable armed force being maintained to repress the bands of plunderers on the western frontier. On one occasion, in 1788, the collector had to call out the troops against a band of marauders five hundred strong, who had made a descent on a market town within two hours' ride of the English station, and murdered or frightened away the inhabitants of between thirty and forty villages. In the beginning of the following year the inroads assumed even more serious proportions, the plunderers going about sacking villages, "in parties of three or four hundred men, well found in arms." The population was panic-stricken, the large villages and trading dépôts were abandoned, and the collector was compelled hastily to recall the outposts stationed at the frontier passes, to levy a militia supplementing the regular troops, and to obtain reinforcements of soldiery from the neighbouring districts. The marauders could not hold out against the powers thus brought to oppose them, and were driven back into the mountains. Order was soon established, and the country recovered with amazing rapidity from the disastrous

effects of the ravages to which it had been exposed. The neglected fields were cultivated once more; the inhabitants returned to the deserted villages; and the people, reassured by the success of the measures taken by the Government, eagerly joined them against the marauders. In the beginning of the present century the district was reported to be remarkably free from robbery; and so completely have the troublous times through which it passed faded from local memory that, a few years ago, the district was described in a public document as still enjoying "its old immunity from crime." The district is now as peaceful as any in Bengal, and the administrative statistics furnish an eloquent commentary on the results of British rule in Birbhum—a happy omen for the future of our newly-acquired and as yet Dacoit-harassed Burmese possessions!

On the 18th of April, 1837, the office of Commissioners for the Suppression of Dacoity was created by Sir Charles Metcalfe, at that time Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces; and Mr. Hugh Fraser, of the Bengal Civil Service, an active and energetic officer, was appointed to conduct the duties. The instructions for his guidance, as conveyed in the Secretary's letter of the 22nd of the month just mentioned, defined the object of his appointment to be the suppression of the crime of Dacoity, or gang robbery perpetrated by violence, most frequently by night, and often attended with bloodshed. These outrages were understood to be generally committed by organized bands of depredators, who resided at a distance from the scene of their atrocities, but were enabled, by the extensive means of information they possessed, to ascertain where plunder could be most easily found. The suddenness of their attack enabled them to overpower resistance at the time, while their immediate dispersion after success effectually baffled all pursuit. The extent of the country over which their depredations ranged, and the rapidity of their movements, offered various impediments to any successful exertions on the part of the local magistrates to prevent their attacks, or to bring the offenders to punishment after the perpetration of their crimes. The Commissioner was, therefore, invested with sufficient powers to enable him, by a well-directed system of research, to seek out these criminals in their usual haunts; to lay open their whole proceedings and economy; to track their steps, whenever they might set out on their expeditions; and to prevent, if possible, their success, or at any rate to pursue them afterwards whithersoever they might flee, and effectually to punish and suppress them.

At that time little or nothing was known to Government or any of its officers of the character or economy of this class of offenders. Dacoities were every day committed, but whence the perpetrators came and whither they fled with their booty, remained unknown. "Everybody talked of Buduk Dacoits," says Colonel

Sleeman, "and their daring robberies ; but no one knew who or what they were, whence they came, or how their system was organized."

Generally speaking, the perpetrators of the Dacoities were not inhabitants of any part of the British territories, but organized banditti from foreign states. "They make descents at night," writes Mr. R. M. Bird, magistrate at Goruckpur, 11th April, 1822, "in parties of from fifty to a hundred, armed with spears—their first step is to stab every man, woman, and child within their reach. The suddenness of their attack precludes every hope of successful resistance. The affair is over in half an hour, when they disperse and return ; and the cover of the jungles, the darkness of the night, and the vicinity of the foreign territory entirely preclude pursuit."

It would be too much in the nature of a blue-book performance if we made any attempt to follow the various agencies called into play for the suppression of Dacoity. Some of its personal and tribal particulars are more interesting.

Dacoity was a profession handed down from father to son through generations, and its members, like the votaries of Thuggee, had a slang language for their own private purposes, and especially adapted to the exercise of their vocation. They had, in fact, several slang languages ; that in use amongst one tribe of Dacoits being studiously kept secret from the members of another. They followed various handicrafts, and masqueraded as fakirs and otherwise in order to conceal their real calling. The first initiation into Dacoity was not attended with any religious ceremonies, but when the youthful candidates had attained their full strength, and appeared sufficiently intelligent to be trusted in such matters, they were taken out on an expedition, and no difference was afterwards made between them and other members of the gang. "While out employed on these expeditions," to quote a narrative of Malchund, an hereditary Dacoit, made before Captain D. A. Malcolm, September, 1847, "we remain in our camps, which we shift occasionally, and pretend to gain a livelihood by buying and selling tattoos, asses, and mules. Our women used formerly to obtain money by dancing and singing, but since we emigrated to the Deccan they have discontinued this practice. The zemindars and country people are, however, perfectly well acquainted with the fact that we gain our livelihood by robbery, and we are, in consequence, obliged from time to time to make them presents of money to induce them not to molest us."

This accusation of the rulers and the gentry of the land, made by a veteran Dacoit, is singularly borne out by a still more egregious and abominable charge formulated by Captain Meadows Taylor, in the "Introduction" to his "Confessions of a Thug." "It has been ascertained by recent investigation," he says, "that in every part of India many of the hereditary landowners and the

chief officers of villages have had private connection with Thugs for generations, affording them facilities for murder by allowing their atrocious acts to pass with impunity, and sheltering the offenders when in danger; whilst in return for those services they received portions of their gains, or laid a tax upon their houses, which the Thugs cheerfully paid. To almost every village (and at towns they are in a greater proportion) several hermits, fakirs, and religious mendicants have attached themselves. The huts and houses of these people, which are outside the walls, and always surrounded by a grove or a garden, have afforded the Thugs places of rendezvous or concealment, while the fakirs, under their sanctimonious garb, have enticed travellers to their gardens by the apparently disinterested offers of shade and good water. The facilities I have enumerated, and hundreds of others which would be almost unintelligible by description, but which are intimately connected with and grow out of the habits of the people, have caused Thuggee to be everywhere spread and practised throughout India." Happily this was written in 1839, and has long been obsolete.

Although the Dacoits did not worship any particular deity in connection with their profession, they found that success attended them whenever they had regard to propitious omens, whilst misfortune was sure to befall them whenever they went in opposition to omens of a contrary nature. Before an expedition left the camp it was a propitious omen if on starting (1) a jay flew from right to left of the road; (2) if a jackal crossed the road it was an omen that the gang would obtain a large booty in silver; (3) if a ghorpur or guana was seen in any direction; (4) if a donkey was heard to bray about twilight in the village in which the shop or house to be attacked was situated; and (5) if the gang, when on their way through the village to the scene of plunder, met a corpse about to be carried out for burial or for cremation. On the other hand it was a bad omen (1) if on the point of leaving the camp, any one should sneeze, in which case the expedition was put off till the following day; (2) if on the day on which they were to start, a piece of bread should break or fall into fragments in the hands of the women engaged in making it; (3) if one of the women should break her bangle or a waterpot, or if the clothes of any of the men should be set on fire by a piece of lighted charcoal dropping from the hookah. The unpropitious omens after the expedition had left the camp were (1) if a snake crossed the road; (2) if the gang met an oilman with a pitcher of oil in his hand; (3) if they met a carpenter; (4) if they were met by any one carrying a new earthen pot; (5) if they were met by a Brahminese woman with her head shaven; (6) or by two cows or bullocks tied or yoked together by their necks; (7) if a fox or a wolf crossed the path, or a corpse, or any one digging a grave was encountered; (8) if in their approach to any village on their route, the gang found a

corpse being burned ; when no success could attend the expedition unless one of the party went with a long stick and thrust it three times into the face of the corpse ; and (9) if when purchasing oil, and paying the seller for the same, any one was heard to sneeze. This was one of the very worst omens that could be encountered.

THE CHARM.

WHAT had she lost ? this dainty, dark-eyed girl
On whom the firelight fell so lovingly,
Kissing each waving ripple and each curl
Of her bowed head. What treasure had she lost ?
A scrap of wedding cake that, duly past
Through the charmed circle of the marriage ring,
Brings to the dreamer's longing eyes at last
The face of him, her future lord and king.

I think if you had asked what faith she laid
On this same charm, she would have answered, " Nay,
It is all nonsense." None the less the maid
Seemed very loath to lose her dreams that night.
And there came one to aid her in the quest,
A fair-haired man with laughter-loving eyes.
And then, perhaps because she needed rest,
Just for a space, her head lay on his breast.

Was the search fruitless ? No, she must have found
Something to flush her face with this new joy.
Ah, can this be the happy hunting ground
That gemmed her finger with the ring she wears ?
What useless queries ! Only this I know :
When sleep at last had closed her happy eyes
And led its strange, weird pageant to and fro,
She saw his face in dreamland's paradise.

AMATEUR MEDICAL TREATMENT IN ITALY.

NOW, pig that you are, you have made me enrage myself, and stirred up bad blood, and my heart beats, and the blood has gone to my head, and I shall have to take oil to-morrow, two ounces of it, and all because of you ; and I wanted to go to Lucca to-morrow to see my sister's son, and now must purge myself, and all because of you and your ill education, pig ! ”

Thus old Signor Giargio, an extensive householder at the town of Viareggio, to Lucio, the cook, who has outwitted him in the affair of a certain damaged dinner-set, which for years has been a handsome source of revenue. How many times that dinner-set has overpaid itself ! How many departing families have, at the last moment, paid for nicks and cracks and chipping which had in fact been made half a century before ! And now this scamp of a Lucio has put an end to all that by first inducing his mistress to pay for a whole dinner set, and then smashing this one into the smallest possible atoms, and tossing them into the middle of the road, laughing all the while in a heartless and aggravating manner. No wonder old Giargio—an obese, bilious, and choleric man—has been roused almost to frenzy. The thick veins in his neck swell, his eyes are bloodshot, he pants with rage, and is altogether not a pleasant object to behold. In fact, he has been fearfully enraged, and, in consequence, he must take castor oil—that is the foundation of amateur medical treatment in Italy. If anybody is angry, very angry—a dose of castor oil ; if violently shocked and startled—a dose of castor oil ; if in deep grief—a dose of castor oil—and this because any sudden, intense, and displeasing emotion “ makes bad blood.” The oil is not given immediately, but very soon, in six or seven hours, and a good large dose of it. The next day the dosed one must diet, a “ semolino,” a peculiarly disagreeable, thin farina water-gruel, slightly salted, a cup or two of *very* weak broth, and a small quantity of thin dry toast, being all the nourishment allowed for twenty-four hours after the dose. Sometimes the dose of oil is preceded by a hot foot bath, with mustard and salt, but not always. The castor oil, given as above stated, is looked upon as a supreme and universal panacea, and, probably, the principle is a right one, so, at least, physicians say. They would say the same undoubtedly of the popular remedy for the sting of a scorpion, practised throughout the length and breadth of Italy, and invented by some man or woman whose name has long since been

lost in the mists of the ages which have elapsed since first the remedy was applied. It is a distinct instance of *similia similibus*, and is prepared in the following manner. A living scorpion is dropped into a wide-necked glass bottle which contains a few drops of olive oil of the finest quality. More oil is poured on instantly, until the bottle is filled and the scorpion dead. In its struggles to free itself it ejects all its poison into the oil, and this poisoned oil forms a sovereign remedy for the sting of a scorpion. There is no doubt as to its efficacy, and it is probably a remedy which homœopathists would approve of on very rational grounds. It is doubtful, however, whether they, or any other medical men, would approve of the "application of the comb," as practised in Lombardy and the Venetian provinces. This remedy is highly unique, and reflects honour upon the originality of the brain which first conceived it. It is applied for chronic dyspepsia, and acute internal inflammation of *all kinds*; the reader's imagination may fill the blank, and need hesitate at none of the evils common to man or woman. The sufferer is laid upon a bed, and firmly held by the assistants—ten of whom have sometimes been required in the case of a strong man—the comb is then prepared and applied. It must be a very old comb, and a very dirty one—the dirtier the better—and it is wrapped in tow which has been well soaked in oil and alcohol. So prepared, it is placed upon the bare stomach of the victim, is set alight, blazes for a moment, and is then covered by a bowl or soup-plate (slightly raised on one side), under which it is allowed to smoulder until the tow is reduced to ashes. Chloroform and ether being either unknown to, or mortally dreaded by, the Italian peasants, the agony endured by the wretched beings to whom the "comb" is applied may better be imagined than described. It is said that the screams of persons subjected to this torture are audible sometimes at a distance of two miles. But sound travels far on these vast, tranquil plains.

The comb is also applied in the Tuscan provinces, but quite differently, and with a different object. Should a nursing mother catch cold in her breast, it is rubbed with olive oil, and a new white ivory fine-tooth comb is placed on her bosom. She wears it day and night until relieved, and it is asserted by the peasants that she is always relieved very speedily. It is said that the comb when so applied is sometimes wrapped with raw silk, but of this I am not quite sure.

Nearly every country village has its "magician," what we should call a herb doctor, probably, except that the magicians sometimes indulge in eccentricities which an Anglo-Saxon herb doctor would not permit himself. For example:

A distinguished physician living in the Venetian provinces had a servant who had lived with him for more than thirty years, and to whom he was much attached. This man had been suffering for more than two years with a peculiar form of dyspepsia, great

pain, and inability to digest anything. His master had treated him with all the skill he possessed, which in point of fact was very great, but had not succeeded in curing him. Michele—that was the servant's name—insisted that his master's remedies left unrelieved a plum which he had eaten two years before, and “which still lay turned to stone on the pit of his stomach” (*sic*). He desired emetics, and they were given him with the usual result, but Michele declared that “the plum” still remained undisturbed. One day he presented himself in his master's study with rather an embarrassed air, and said that he had something very particular to say.

“Well, poverino, say on,” said his master kindly.

“Sissignore; well, the signore sees and knows that he is one of the greatest physicians in Italy, oh! in the world, and the signore performs miracles certainly; he could almost make the dead live again—but—but—yet——”

“But yet, my poor Michele, I have not done you much good. Is it not so?”

“Sissignore,” exclaimed Michele, infinitely relieved. “The signore has been attending me now for more than two years, and has spent much time and trouble on me certainly, and given me much costly medicine. To be sure, if costly medicine and wise learning could have *melted that plum*, I should have been well long ago. But just see! the signore is too great a physician for poor people like me; his medicines are for grand ladies and gentlemen with more delicate constitutions, and it is better for us to have some one with no learning.”

“Ah, Michele,” interrupted his master, “you want to consult a magician, eh?”

“Sissignore; as the signore knows, the magicians often succeed when the great physicians fail; and then the magicians have a gift of healing.”

“Have they indeed! How?”

“Things are revealed to them.”

“Revealed! But suppose we study the human body and discover those things, is not that just as well?”

“No, signore,” replied Michele with much solemnity. “There is no healing like that which is revealed; and in my own native village of San Bonifacio there is a mago (magician) who works wonders.”

“Well, Michele, you may go and consult him; but suppose he fails to cure you, what then?”

“Ah, then, signore, I shall just know that it is the will of God that I should suffer, and that there is no hope of cure, and I shall pray our Lord and the Madonna to grant me a good end; but while I stay here and take the signore's remedies I shall always be thinking that it might have been possible for me to get well, and so I shall be uneasy.”

"Just so, my poor Michele. Well, go, and God bless you."

And Michele went. He had leave of absence for several days, although his native village was but five miles distant, and after several days it was announced that he was at home and in bed, "very ill," report said. His master went to see him, having previously sent word that his visit was a friendly, not a professional one. Very closely was Michele tucked up in bed, and very queer he looked, his head and jaws being tightly bandaged. On being questioned, and on being assured that his master felt no professional jealousy—an emotion which Michele's natural delicacy would have respected—he avowed that he felt much better.

"Ah, signore," he exclaimed, "the mago is a wonderful man. When I reached his cottage he was upstairs, alone, and his wife—a kind, sympathizing woman—said he must not be disturbed, that great healing was revealed to him when he was alone. And so I sat down in the kitchen, a plain peasant's kitchen but clean, and the mago's wife asked me all about my illness, and she said her husband had cured many such. And after a long long time he came, and he looked at me, and says he, 'Poverino!' says he, 'I know your sickness,' says he. 'For two years you have had a stone on the pit of your stomach, a stone plum,' yes, signore, he said that. Now, the signore knows that that must have been revealed to him, for how could he have known it? And then he told me that to cure me I must have a slice cut off of each of my ears—(Michele's ears, it must be observed, were preposterously large)—and then the pain, the plum, would go away."

"H—man. And you allowed this, Michele?"

"Sissignore; that is, I sat down on the lowest step of the stairs, and the mago above me, and the vecchia (old woman) brought me a hot iron to lay on the pit of my stomach, and then the mago took out—Gesù Maria!—such a pair of scissors, and he cut off a slice of one of my ears, and then he said he must cut a bigger slice, and I——"

"Well?"

"Well, signore, I lost courage, and I dropped the iron, and I knocked over the poor vecchia who tried to hold me, and I ran, ran all the way home, and the mago after me with the scissors. I came by the fields, which, as the signore knows, are three miles shorter than the road. All the way I ran in a burning sun, and Caterina, poor soul, thought I was dying when I came in, and all bleeding and steaming as I was I dropped on the bed, and then, *con rispetto* (saving your presence) I vomited. Santa Maria! But, signore," continued Michele, dropping his voice to a solemn whisper, and pointing to the mantelpiece, "*there is the plum!*"

"The plum?"

"Yes, indeed, signore, the very plum I ate two years ago, and which turned to stone in the pit of my stomach. The mago, poor man, ran after me as I told you, and he bound up my ears and

head, saying he would not cut my ears any more that day, and he sat by me while I was sick and comforted me, and then he told Caterina and me I had vomited up the plum, and he took it home to show his wife, and only this morning he brought it back, and gave it to me to keep."

"He did, did he? Very generous of him, I am sure. Did either of you see the plum before he took it away?"

"No, signore," replied Caterina majestically. "But here it is."

The plum—which, by-the-bye, is still to be seen on the mantelpiece of Michele's little kitchen—looks suspiciously like the coloured alabaster fruit so extensively sold in Italy.

"But it is the very same purple plum I ate two years ago, only turned to stone," says Michele solemnly.

"The droll part of the whole matter is," said the good Dr. — laughing, "that since the ear-snipping, the race home, and the vomiting, Michele has been completely cured, so that I must own the magician's skill."

In the mountain villages in Tuscany, a new-born infant is at once bathed in hot red wine, then swathed and bound, and finally *fed with a roast apple!* its very first meal in this queer world, while his mamma has her bowl of "pappa," bread stewed in oil and garlic. Twelve hours later mamma takes her dose of castor oil, and is nourished on the following day with "semolino" and broth. But on the third day her little cottage is put in gala array, and all her friends and neighbours come to visit her, as she is on her queer high bed, with her tightly-swathed bambino beside her. Bambino is protected from the danger of being overlaid and smothered by a curious lattice-work arrangement, which looks something like an inverted hen-coop, or an extinguisher, and which covers him as he lies beside mamma.

When the visitors have offered their congratulations, and expressed their admiration of baby, they present their gifts. No one, however poor, comes empty handed for the confinement visit. Flasks of wine and oil, chickens, ducks and geese, bread, rice, macaroni, dried fruit, and eggs are given. Nothing is too small. A couple of drumsticks, if one cannot give a whole fowl, a tiny bottle of oil if one cannot give a flask, an egg, if the giver should be too poor to give more than one, are cheerfully offered, and gratefully accepted.

In some of the mountain villages of Tuscany, a syrup of radishes—a horrible confection—is given to new-born infants instead of the roast apple. In the mountain villages above Pistoja, it used to be the custom to treat any weakness of the bladder in children with "rat tea," i.e., a rat was killed, skinned, cleaned and stewed, and frightful to relate, the poor little one was fed with this revolting broth. The cure was said to be efficacious, but has now fallen somewhat into disuse.

If a child has worms it is fed with fried dumplings, made of

pounded and burned coral, flour and water, and should this remedy not prove efficacious, a poultice of herbs is applied to the stomach. For sudden cold in the head, the patient—in the Abbruzzi provinces—is put to bed, and a red-hot iron shovel is held as close to his head as he can bear it, until the sneezing, oppression, and irritation is relieved.

For eruptions on the skin and erysipelas, a lotion prepared of sour milk and pounded charcoal is applied, and for simple fever a poultice of *snails*, pounded with their shells, is applied to the feet, and a chicken is caught, cut open, and fitted closely, all gasping and bleeding, to the patient's head. This revolting night-cap is supposed to be very efficacious. As a remedy for weak eyes the Abbruzzi peasant prefers a very fresh egg warm from the hen, with which the patient's eyes are rubbed, until "the vision clears," if clear it does, and for ear-ache a little cotton, dipped in oil, is put into the ears.

A far better remedy, one unequalled indeed for ear-ache, is that in use among the sailors and bathers at Viareggio and Leghorn, and indeed all along the coast of that part of Italy. A piece of old linen is spread with melted beeswax—the purer the better—and then rolled tightly into a cornucopia shape, the small end of which is introduced into the patient's ear as he lies down. The cornucopia should be not less than three, four, or even five inches long. Flannel cloths are then laid over the head and face, the cornucopia is set alight, and burns slowly as long as the patient can bear it, until burned quite near the face, when it is removed from the ear. This proceeding gives almost instant relief, and if the pain happen to have been caused by the presence of any foreign substance in the ear, it will come away with the cornucopia.

To remove moles, a lotion made of roses stewed in red wine is applied; and warts are rubbed with the juice of ripe figs, or better still, with ear wax! Bruises and cuts are usually bathed in the common red wine of the country, which is supposed to have a soothing and healing effect.

LAUNT THOMPSON.

HELÈNE.

INSCRIBED upon the gallery wall
Of a great noble's Tudor hall,
One reads a single word—"Helène,"
And stays perforce to read again.
A girl's fair writing, lady small,
In pencil; with a foreign grace
About it somehow, and delight
Of Youth within it. Pearly white
Fair fingers traced it some bright day
One fancies; soft thro' Tudor bay
From great sweet gardens came the air,
And light gusts tossed the ringlets back
As the swift pencil made its track,
And fluttered o'er the red lips sweet,
Where rose a smile, her thought to greet.
"Helène" she wrote; and lovingly,
She gone, they fenced it as we see
With square of glass and tiny frame.
What is the memory—whose the name
Thus guarded from all taint and shame
Of Time or fingers, and here set
The house's very amulet?
What hopes, what fate, lie shut within
This pencil writing fair and thin?
What hours by passion made sublime,
What love with laugh at lapsing time,
What sense that all earth's honours bring
Are worth not life's full petalled spring?
What ache of heart, dry throb of lips,
Widowed of kisses, when life dips
To death's absorbing;—and, ah me!
What hope, that thro' tears wistfully
Outlooks?—none tell us. Tudor hall
Or shepherd's shieling, love is all
That guerdons care, and still will stay
When laboured fretwork falls in clay,
When thro' loose casements stares the day,
And under flowers the bones decay.

So thought I as I turned to go,
For guides and vassals brook not slow
And pensive loiterers—you know.
And as I turned, thro' lattice pane
One sun-ray fired the word "HELÈNE."

J. J. BRITTON.

THE CARNIVAL AT MENTONE.

THIS an old story that pleasure is comparative; while "the greatest" is not known "great" is superlative, and we are content with positive enjoyment. There is, also, another old story, to the effect that among the blind the one-eyed man is king; and human nature is so constituted that there is not one among us who, at one time or another during life, does not gladly fill that throne and think he benefits his fellow-creatures, by dwelling on marvels of which they can form no conception. Now, the Carnival at Rome or Naples, the wild excitement of the revels there are quite unknown to me; but, as some of my country-folk are in a worse condition than myself, not having seen a carnival of any kind, the desire of playing one-eyed king grows strong upon me, for, I am convinced, no future such-like festival can yield me keener pleasure than that which introduced me to the Lord of Follies.

Yet, description must fail to give the least idea of the glee that takes possession even of the wise and staid, from the first moment when His Majesty enters a town, until his ashes strew the place of burial. It sweeps over the country like a wind from which there is no escape—an emotion unique, inexplicable, as astonishing as universal and harmless. Folly, for the moment, is supreme, and amusement, pure and simple, the end sought and attained. Pessimists may sigh over childhood and childish joys, once past gone for ever. "Ho!" cried the Carnival, "I supply both! Come all of ye! Don but my livery of many colours; hide your grey hairs and wisdom, pain and sickness of heart under the merciful shelter of my domino. I will assure ye sport enough without compromise of dignity. Come, all of ye! Buy *confetti*, shovels, bags, and flowers. Fling ye them right heartily and I will provide ye your reward!" And so, with a mighty laugh, he passes on.

To fulfil his word? Oh, yes; to all who forget themselves, their rank and dignity. None else may hope to find King Carnival a "merrie monarch." His obedient vassals, looking back, can always count a few short hours during which, even far on in middle age, the free, fresh, wholesome gaiety of youth again was theirs. From the donkey-boy who ornaments his ass with paper roses to the cavalcade that wins the Monte Carlo prize; from the grand *belle dame* in fancy wig and satin to the *contadina*

in wire mask and cotton ; from the *savant* with his knowledge and the invalids who scarce dare hope to see another summer, to the unlearned, healthy ragamuffins scraping the waste *confetti* from the road ; rich and poor, sick and well, wise and ignorant, all catch at least a glimpse of the short-lived fun that the jolly sovereign scatters broadcast.

We were a rather cosmopolitan assembly at the Pension Santa Maria, my first winter at Mentone ; but, although we were few in numbers—the places at *table d'hôte* being never laid for more than ten at once—we prided ourselves on furnishing representatives of nine nationalities. There was a Danish professor and his wife, an Austrian doctor and a Polish engineer whose better halves were respectively Hungarian and English, two Australians, two Irish, a French lady, and a Schwarzwald pastor.

Mademoiselle V. was a beauty with a spice of kindly mischief in her nature, that made her appreciated when the invalids were in low spirits. Judging from her appearance, she had stepped out of a picture dated 1792, and had lived merrily ever since, without changing the style of her *coiffure*, losing the softness of her arching brows, the brightness of her eyes, or the delicacy of her clear-cut profile. Her chief delight was in teasing the pastor out of a persistent gloom which sat ill on his boyish face.

The night before the Carnival we had, as usual, trooped into the dining-room by twos and threes, saluted one another, and then each one lifted a curiosity-arousing piece of bluish-green paper which lay on his or her plate. It ran :

DÉPÊCHE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE.

Sa Majesté Carnaval, Roi de toutes les folies, arrivera en Gare de Menton vendredi soir 13 courant, par train spécial. La joyeuse population de la bonne ville de Menton est priée de se porter en foule à la rencontre de l'aimable souverain pour fêter sa venue, et illuminer aux flammes de Bengale sur le parcours du brillant cortège. La plus folle gaieté est de rigueur.

La circulation des soucis et tracas est interdite sur tout le passage de Sa Majesté.

Le Héraut d'Armes.

GIAN TISTERI.

"Ah ! Voilà !" cried mademoiselle briskly, after carefully examining the despatch. "Now for *masques* and *confetti*, monks and columbines. Mr. the Parson, have you bought your disguise ?"

The Schwarzwaldler raised his head slowly and, presently, relaxed into a pensive smile. "Moi ?" he asked in a tone of sad astonishment. "Moi ? Ah, non. Moi, *je suis mha-late !*"

It was his general reply.

Mademoiselle eyed him whimsically for a second. "Ah, vous !" she exclaimed. "Toujours le même ! Mr. Professor, are you going to the Carnival ?" she added, turning to the Dane.

Now, Herr Z. was a mathematician of renown, whose chief

characteristic, beyond a winning simplicity of manner, was a lock of hair standing bolt upright at the back of his head, and acting as a kind of barometer to the mental state of weather within. When the individual hairs diverged in a species of bristling brush, we knew the calculations had gone wrong that day, though his temper was always serene. When, on the other hand, they bent gracefully, protectingly, with an air of condescending approbation towards the crown, we felt satisfied all his problems were, as they should be, proof positive and plain as pike-staves.

To-night he was radiant, and the lock quivered with anticipation of fun.

"Certainly, I will go," he said heartily, "and enjoy myself. Is not *la plus folle gaîté de rigueur*? Let us make a party," he continued to me; "will you come?"

"Mademoiselle is solemn," remarked the pretty Hungarian, peeping around her husband. "She forgets '*la circulation des soucis est interdite*.'"

"I am composing a masque," said I, "and it is no easy matter, I assure you."

"Poor mademoiselle!" sympathized the professor. "Take example by me. I will go in my dressing-gown, and my wife shall lend me her night-cap."

"Ha!" exclaimed that lady, "I wear no night-cap."

"That is nothing," laughed the Dane. "Thou wilt for the occasion."

"But mademoiselle has not yet described her costume," remarked the French lady.

"I cannot," said I sorrowfully; "I know nothing about it, except, as it cannot be the prettiest, it shall be the ugliest in Mentone."

Whereat every one laughed, and the conversation changed.

About nine o'clock, when we had retired for the night, I spread out materials for the famous masque, and fell to wondering what could be made out of the cover of a copy-book, a pair of dark spectacles, a few bits of black silk, and a waterproof cloak. I was not ashamed to contrive, for common sense had pointed out the absurdity of wasting money, when *M. le Carnaval* asked no such sacrifice. Ideas, however, were scarce, and the few that came, fruitless. I opened my window and, leaning on the sill, looked out. The weather was mild and clear, but there was no moon, and the stars twinkled like diamonds on purple velvet. The outlines of the Red Rocks, La Mortola and Bordighera, loomed through the semi-darkness like shadows on shadows softer still. The Quay was dotted with golden globes, and the lamps on the rigging of the vessels in the harbour completed the base of a pyramid of lights, whose apex was the *Campanile* in the Old Town. There was not a leaf stirring—nothing to break the silence but the glap-glap-glap of the ripples against the wall.

Suddenly there came the faint roll of distant drums. Springing to my feet, I ran to the door, opened it, and flew down the passage to my Chief's room, at which I thumped violently. Her maid unlocked it in a fright, fire or sudden death being uppermost in her mind.

"Sa Majesté arrive!" I gasped.

In an instant the Chief slipped past me. "Vite, vite, Jeannette!" she cried; "sa Majesté arrive!"

Jeannette looked ready to jump into the middle of next week, if she only knew which way to go. "Eh? Quoi? Quelle Majesté?" she exclaimed wildly. "Dites moi, je vous prie. Moi, je ne comprends rien!"

"Sa Majesté le Carnaval!" floated back to her from afar, whereupon she, too, set off at a run.

We were already on the way to a disused turret, from which there was a view of the whole Bay, and as we hurried along the corridor we heard stifled voices and patterings, as of slippered feet, and, I have a suspicion, had we looked in that direction, Herr Z. in his dressing-gown and Madame in her night-cap—she was an obedient wife—would have been seen on the terrace, with their small son between them.

The drums were meanwhile steadily advancing, and, as we placed ourselves at the window, a slender line of leaping flame appeared at the far end of the Bay nearest the Old Town. As it lengthened itself out a triumphal car came into sight, round which a multitude of will-o'-the-wisps were dancing, their torches reflected in the water below. Before this erection and guard of honour marched the soldiers forming the *retraite aux flambeaux*, their gravity and military precision contrasting strangely with the motley crowd they led. One by one every hotel *en route* threw up rockets and burned Bengal lights to salute the monarch in his royal progress. Presently the music became louder.

"Voilà! Il arrive! Il arrive!" cried Jeannette excitedly over our shoulders. "Mais, c'est joli, n'est-ce pas? C'est extrêmement joli. Voilà quelque chose de magnifique pour votre histoire, mademoiselle!"

My story is a creation always beginning and never going on, for which Jeannette collects material assiduously. The system has advantages, but I was too much absorbed in admiration then to heed her. At the moment a company of frantic masques, brandishing Chinese lanterns, came circling round a slowly advancing car on which sat *Le Bonhomme* himself, swelling with generous pride. The Herald-at-arms preceeded him. This personage was a dignified dwarf in Turkish costume, who bore, with considerable difficulty, a sword twice as long as himself. He seemed even smaller than reality by reason of the giant on the car. Two horses drew *M. le Carnaval*, but the lack of steeds was amply compensated by a huge wine-bottle, which he lifted to his

lips suggestively from time to time. Such a jolly Guy Fawkes in prosperity he was! saluting his loving subjects right and left, smiling good-humouredly on the antics of his merry crew, with never a thought of coming doom to sadden him. He was the Prince of Fools and played the fool right royally.

Following in order came his suite, dancing round a small paper portmanteau, illuminated from within, which they carried aloft on a pole. Countless masques marched next, and the procession closed with a miscellaneous "tail" of votaries vieing with each other in extravagance of gesture.

The most remarkable feature, perhaps, of the spectacle was the silence in which it was conducted. There was no shouting of any kind; except the drums and the tramp of feet there was no accompanying sound. The motley groups came out of obscurity, joyfully stimulating each other to fresh exertion by vivid pantomime, and vanished into obscurity again. Had there been sunshine and broad daylight, no doubt the sense of mystery had been dispelled; but in the darkness of this star-lit hour, when the only other radiance sprang from a billow out at sea, as it reflected some rocket-flash and shone for a second like a sheet of molten silver, the weird impression was intensified. It was like a dream that is known to be a dream, and which yet causes unaccountable excitement.

We stood at the window until the masques had again made the circuit of Garavan, having left *Sa Majesté* at the Grand Hotel; and when the last torch had disappeared into the Old Town we stole back quietly to our rooms; I, with an odd sensation of winding myself up to act a part which had been already played out before my birth.

Next day the business of amusing oneself commenced about noon. All the morning, donkey-boys and coachmen had been busily engaged decorating their respective charges. Every strap of importance was ornamented with leaves and flowers; the carriages were entirely covered with linen and wreathed more or less elaborately with graceful sprays; the spokes of some wheels, even, being hidden by camellias and mimosa. About two p.m. those who intended joining the procession had gathered themselves together at the Grand Hotel, where His Majesty awaited them; and, for about an hour previous, the Quay was brilliant with creatures who might have stepped out of fairy tales: columbines, monks, harlequins, pantaloons, and spirits in every shade of yellow, red, green, violet and blue. One monster consisted entirely of gourds—of bone-like gourds: nose, chin, hands, hat, shoes and garments were of the same material; he seemed the ghost of graveyards, or one of Ezekiel's skeleton men.

The prettiest cavalcade was formed of six Mexicans, who, in velvet, sombreros, and tassels, with guns slung across their backs, galloped up and down Garavan at break-neck speed. They won

the Monte Carlo prize. There was also a charming group of six handsome lads on donkeys: their costume close-fitting green, and each wearing a different coloured rose as head gear. The best single masque after the ghoul was an orangeman, whose suit was contrived out of orange leaves, sewed together scale-wise, Tangerines, or, as we should call them, Maltese oranges, supplying the place of ornaments and buttons.

The procession was very long in getting into motion and longer still in passing by, and the effect, while more ambitious, was not by any means so pretty as that of the preceding night. Sunshine and the *mistral* ill replace darkness and torchlight, and by day, it is hard not to look fools as well as act folly. But even at such a time when rank is supposed forgotten and equality, if ever, *en règle*, Nature will have her way and afford food for reflection. In one of the last carriages that passed were seated four young ladies, beautifully dressed in pink satin, flaxen wigs and dominoes. They had a sack of *confetti* between them, and were each armed with a tin shovel. As they drove by our window a few soldiers on the opposite side of the road pelted them—it was legitimate, the Carnival had begun. But, to our surprise, the carriage drew up, and one of the young ladies alighted in a tremendous rage, swearing at the offenders energetically. I noticed then that “mademoiselle’s” legs were encased in the blue and crimson trousers of a cavalry officer. The soldiers were quite crestfallen; they listened to the storm of abuse like beaten hounds, and when the young lady had driven off with her companions they followed slowly, shrugging their shoulders dolefully. I could not help thinking an Englishman would have been more just than to expect any one to recognize him in disguise.

Our party in the end proved a small one. Every one was “*mha-late*,” as the Schwarzwälder had it, except Mademoiselle V——, the Hungarian, Herr Z—— and myself. Mademoiselle had donned a linen dust cloak and tied her head up in black lace. The pretty Hungarian had followed her example, except that a brown Turkish towel was most artistically draped round her mask. The professor, on second thoughts, discarded the dressing-gown and had allowed Madame to robe him in a plaid shawl, toga fashion, kept in place by huge white nursery pins. As for me, I kept my word, as an Inquisitor no one could rival my hideousness. People retired horror-stricken before me; and, although the bolder masques flung *confetti* by shovelfuls when they heard the pellets rattling harmlessly against the stiff black domino, they fled in dismay from the glassy stare of my dark spectacles. And I chuckled silently, spying out unprotected necks and ears for my especial prey.

The town was prettily decorated. From window to gabled window, across the quaint old streets, strings of many coloured flags were [stretched, and garlands of leaves and flowers. The

shops were all closed, the shutters wreathed and starred, and the ground was white with spent *confetti*. The roads and footpaths were thronged with brilliant masques, some chattering in squeaky voices, others pelting unsuspecting tyros. Sometimes snatches of Rossini's melody :

"Carnival's passing, passing away,"

"Santa Lucia," or "Bella sei come un' angelo," rose above the general confusion, as groups of friends came leaping and singing through the crowd. But even when the fun was at its height, there was no pushing or shoving, and no impertinence. *Confetti* skirmishes were, of course, indiscriminate, and often fierce, but whenever the sign of truce—a tiny bouquet—was thrown the enemy waved his hand in joyful triumph and respectfully withdrew.

In the Grande Place the professor was in his element. He flung *confetti* with both hands, vigorously. His Scotch caps lipped off, his toga came undone, but in spite of difficulties he fought on gallantly, his frank honest face beaming with delight. And the masques approved of him; they danced round him; they capered and pelted him, till, on one occasion, a monk spoke in Danish. "Let us give it to him *well*," said he; whereupon the professor responded, and both stopped fighting to shake hands and exclaim at having met a compatriot so far south. We, not understanding, were astonished at the sudden change of tactics, and cried out upon our comrade; but he was too much pleased to heed reproach, and it was certainly pleasant for us to see his enjoyment.

Having tired ourselves sufficiently in the ring, we went to a *café* famed for excellence, and refreshed ourselves with *café noir*. There, a masque in green, who had followed us all the afternoon, turning up when least expected to pelt my domino, peeped in at the window. He peered through the glass curiously, as if in search of some one, and shook his head despondingly more than once. At last his eye fell on my mask lying on a chair; immediately uttering a series of shrieks he sprang into the air and vanished round the corner, crowing like a cock.

So ended one of the "jolliest" days of my life. We had, all of us, headaches, certainly, on our return home; but what of that? We had been young again, and the experience was worth the price. Pitying the Schwarzwaldler at dinner, for his great loss in not having been with us, we observed a curious change pass over the young man's face. He leaned back in his chair and surveyed us slowly; he grew red and laughed to himself; then he opened his mouth and said in worse French than usual :

"*Ce n'était pas bon pour la santé; mais . . . j'étais là!*"

Was he the masque in green?

ELWYN KEITH.

ONLY A LIFE!

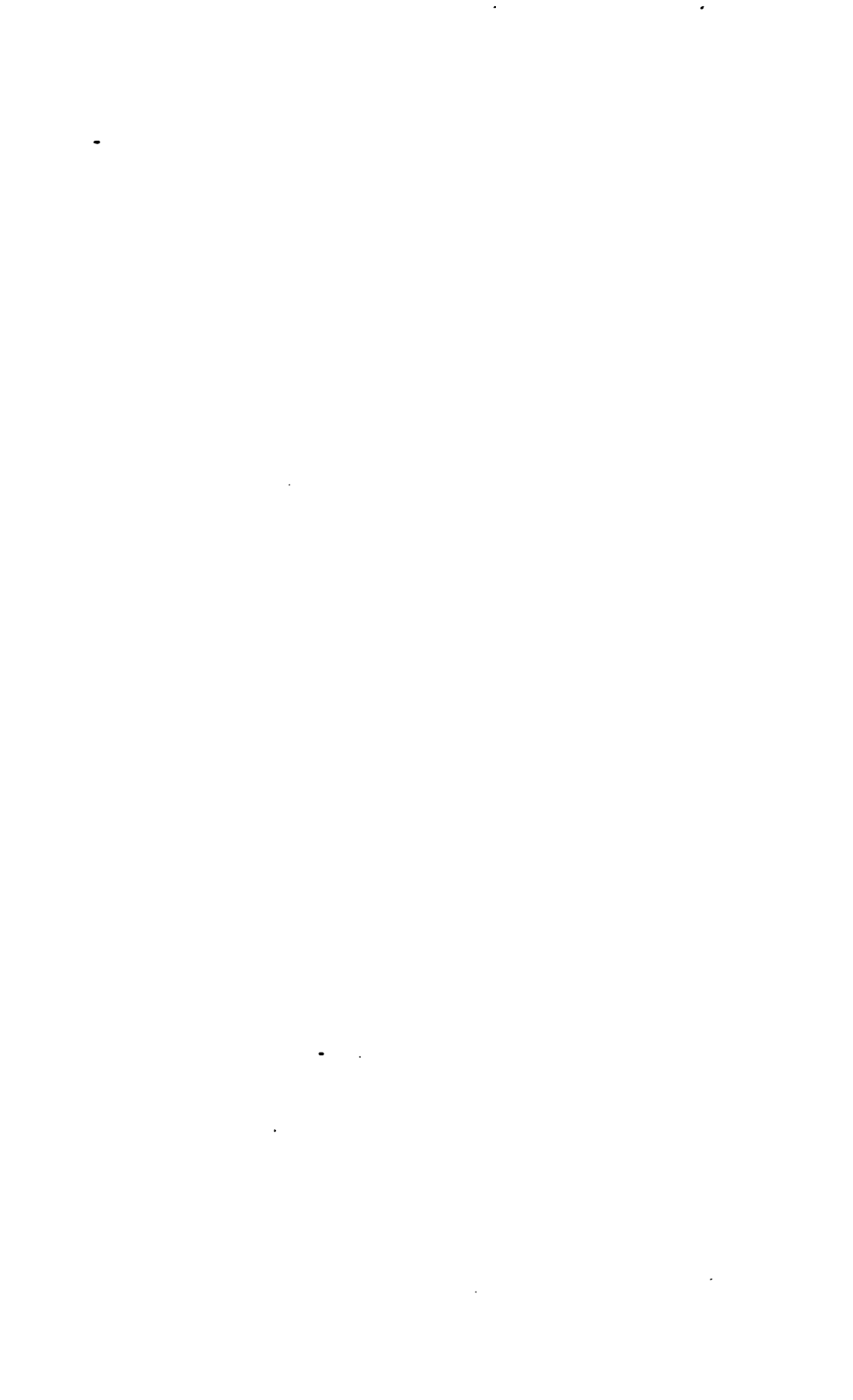
'Twas only a baby's soft sweet smile,
'Twas only a mother's song ;
'Twas only the zephyr which blew awhile,
'Twas only Spring all day long.

'Twas only a hidden modest blush,
'Twas only love's bright play ;
'Twas only a silent, peaceful hush,
'Twas only a Summer day.

'Twas only a loving wife's embrace,
'Twas only a husband's kiss ;
'Twas only a well-earned day of grace,
'Twas only Autumnal bliss.

'Twas only a single, muffled knell,
'Twas only an open tomb ;
'Twas only a snowbound, frozen spell,
'Twas only Winter's gloom.

H. CATTERSON-SMITH.





IRISH LANDLORD AND HIS TENANTS

(Temp. Queen Victoria.)

A design for a piece for some public building.

LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL, 1886

ELIZABETH'S FOP.

CHAPTER X.

A FIRST NIGHT.

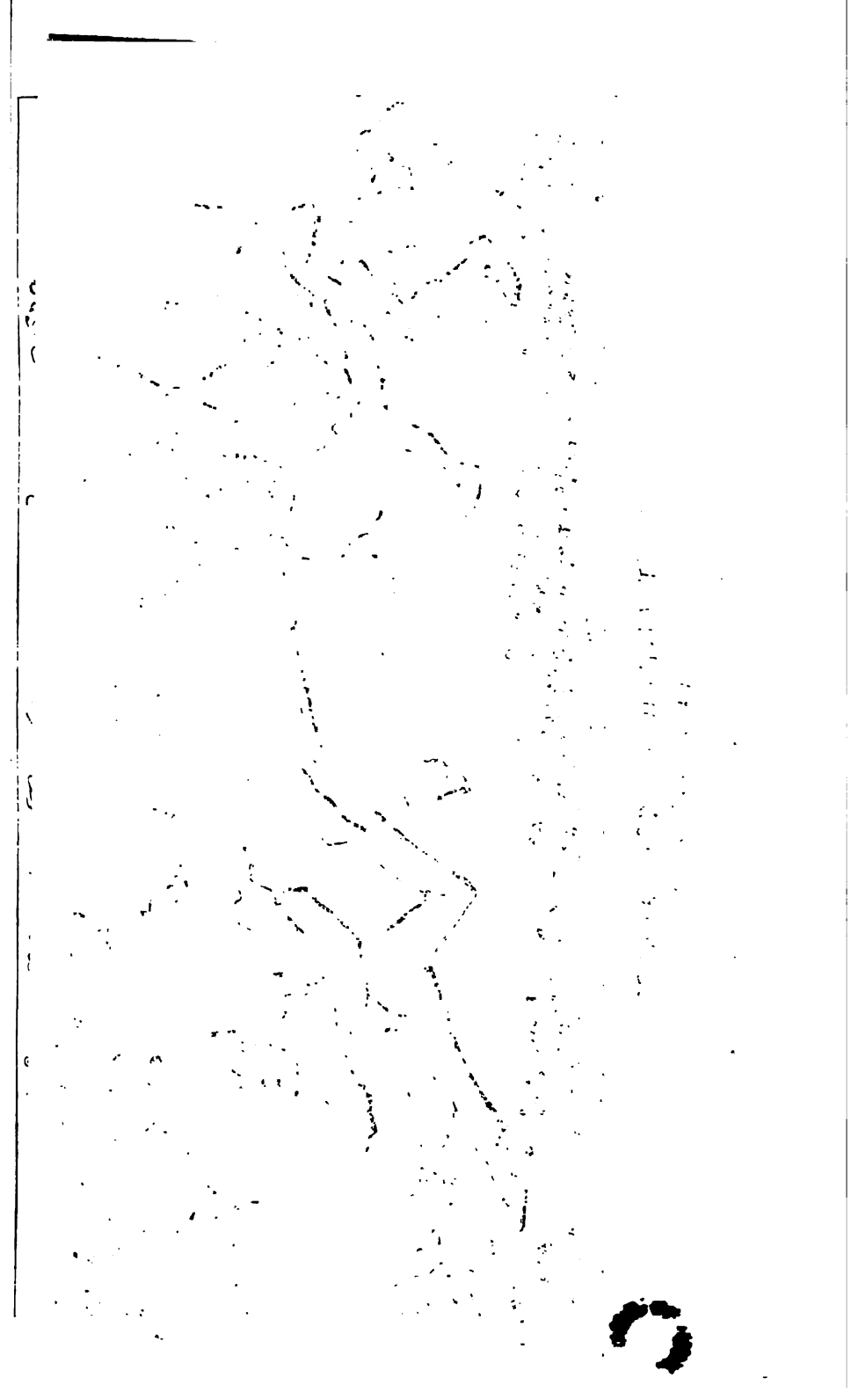
"PLAYERS." Forsooth, we answer to that, playing our trade on the boards, and so forth, and so on, each fresh step as it were a fresh step to the ridiculous, each fresh step as it were a fresh step to the or rank abuse. No stone prophet could tell what would come up. If you live by this gaming-table you must get hardened to its risks, else you would grow old and worn out in no time. But I was a novice, dreaded public notice, public neglect, stood in awe of Gifford's sarcasm, sickened at the thought of the papers. A prey to legions of terrors, I left my dressing-room that memorable First Night—white-frocked, short-waisted, puffed-sleeved, mob-capped—wearing a make-believe smile of self-satisfaction. Gifford ran his eye over his rustic heroine from top to bottom, you cast up a bill. Was I right? I caught him looking at him:

"I'm hung if she doesn't look it better than Anna Lee," and I thought Gifford nodded. Ah, this time I was wrong. Dramatic ambition lay low. Too glad to be admitted to something better than somebodv, I blessed my good stars, my cheeks, young looks, if only they would help to keep a good temper with me, and myself to pass to the heroine.

"The house is brim full," announced the prompter, and I stepped up as the first villain of the first piece. The prompter pulled the curtain, "and by Jove! there they are."

"Where, where?" asked Davenant, craning his neck to see, unseen. Not for worlds would he spoil the heroine's *entrée* to a single spectator by affording a prelude. He looked at himself in his becoming scarlet hunting coat. "I don't know," he said, "would be as good as her word."

"Duchess? Bosh, man! I mean the enemy," said the prompter, "strong."



LONDON SOCIETY.

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APRIL, 1886.
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ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER X.

A FIRST NIGHT.

"PLAYERS." Forsooth, we answer to that name. Gamblers, plying our trade on the boundary-lines of glory and of ridicule, each fresh step as it were a fresh toss for sky-high praise or rank abuse. No stage prophet can foretell which will come up. If you live by this gaming-table you must get hardened to its risks, else you would grow old and worn out in no time. But I was a novice, dreaded public notice, public neglect, stood in awe of Gifford's sarcasm, sickened at the thought of the papers. A prey to legions of terrors, I left my dressing-room that memorable First Night—white-frocked, short-waisted, puffed-sleeved, mob-capped—wearing a make-believe smile of self-security as Gifford ran his eye over his rustic heroine from top to toe, as you cast up a bill. Was I right? I caught Graves' aside to him :

"I'm hung if she doesn't look it better than Annie Torrens!" and I thought Gifford nodded. Ah, this time I took no offence. Dramatic ambition lay low. Too glad to be admitted to do something better than somebody, I blessed my good stature, bright cheeks, young looks, if only they would help to put people in a good temper with me, and myself to pass muster as Gifford's heroine.

"The house is brim full," announced Graves—elaborately got up as the first villain of the first piece—reconnoitring through the curtain, "and by Jove! there they are in Box B."

"Where, where?" asked Davenant, craning his neck to see, unseen. Not for worlds would he spoil the effect of his *entrée* to a single spectator by affording a premature glimpse of himself in his becoming scarlet hunting coat. "I knew the duchess would be as good as her word."

"Duchess? Bosh, man! I mean the enemy. See there. Three strong."

In a box dangerously near the stage appeared, not Annie herself, but certain supposed emissaries of hers from the *Métropole*, swashing young sprigs of effrontery, among whom I recognized my tormentor of the other night. "Looks ugly," Graves remarked. "It's war to the tooth and the nail."

"Why, what can they do?" asked James Romney, who played second villain, and the studious villainy of whose appearance no stranger to him could duly appreciate.

"Not shy rotten eggs or brickbats," returned Graves. "But look out for knavish tricks. If a hitch comes, or a scene flags, Gifford's a dead man—I mean, the play's a d—d play." To which cheerful prediction the curtain rose on the opening tableau. Here, here alone, success was a foregone conclusion.

May Day. A spreading chestnut tree in spring leaf, decked with flowers and festoons, standing amid pale green copsewood and primroses, whilst away down the dell loomed the turrets and chimneys of the manor. Village lasses and lads dancing to the strains of the blind fiddler seated on a barrel, piper by his side, children lolling on the grass, and a couple of lazy loons looking on.

The merry-makers go off to fetch the May Queen, and the loiterers, Reuben and Jethro, open the piece in Hampshire dialect. Only James Romney gave the genuine twang, but as with the real pig's squeak of old, the effect it produced was *nil* as compared with Beattie Graves' imitation.

The rogues—for precious rogues they both are, though holding positions of trust on the manor—are in no holiday humour. Squire Lilford has long been away in London, ill and on the shelf, whilst thievish dependants grew rich. The unannounced arrival of his son Lionel has discomfited the rascally pair, threatens their doings with exposure, themselves with ruin—Botany Bay!

How to master their master, by force or by fraud? Jethro has discovered that young Lionel is secretly courting May Aston, the village beauty. Like father, like son! There was talk long ago about the squire and Dinah the handsome gipsy, years before she married Forrest, the gamekeeper. Some years later Forrest was shot in a poaching fray. And Reuben hints at a dark secret he holds, which if known would blast the name of Lilford. Dinah suddenly left the village and her child. Gone back to her tribe, it was believed; but the squire, according to Reuben, knew better. He saw her at the manor, arranged for her disappearance, and undertook to provide in the village for the dead gamekeeper's son, Zed, who at this point emerges from the copse.

As Charlotte Hope stepped into sight, a short sharp burst of applause followed as spontaneously as the report of a gun follows the pulling of the trigger. How that rather hard-featured woman of thirty had managed this metamorphosis into a handsome

picturesque gipsy lad, only she and her dresser knew. Did they know? Mind's magic did more for Charlotte Hope than the artifice of a crisp black head of hair, clear olive complexion, drooping eyes, and darkened lids; form, face, voice seemed freshly created by a new spirit. The idea of this young Ishmaelite, with the inborn, anti-social devil in him dormant only because hitherto unprovoked, was flashed upon the dullest conceptions, from the first, vividly as a whole, and held them up to the last by fresh touches of reality in the minutest particulars. Box B, striking up a conversation, elicited such fierce hushes as forced the occupants to reserve their shots for a better opportunity.

The rascals—whose villainy is relieved by a vein of rustic comicality running through the hypocrisy of the smooth-faced Reuben and the blunt ruffianism of his fellow—propose to make Zed their tool. He loves May Aston; Jethro insinuates to him that his hopes are likely to be baffled by a selfish, false-hearted profligate. The lad, incensed and incredulous, is bidden to watch.

Now the *cortège* returns, escorting the May Queen. My entrance was instantaneously followed by a stir in the house that fluttered me vastly. Then came a loud whisper from Box B. "The Duchess, Mr. Pemberton, and Lady Mabel." My *entrée* was spoilt, but at least it was a duchess who had done the mischief.

The holiday-makers disperse to go primrosing in the woods. Now comes the confirmation of Jethro's suspicion—Lionel Lilford, to take from the hollow of the tree May's note promising to slip away from her comrades and come to the tryst. She comes, and a pretty idyllic scene follows between the lovers. Lionel asks implicit trust, which May seems ready to accord. Zed has followed, watched unseen the exchange of fond words and vows, and when the two are gone he reappears before us, already another creature from the harmless, dreamy youngster of half an hour ago. Reuben's venomous secret, now poured into his ears, completes the work of turning the boy into a savage. Zed learns that the death of his father, Forrest the gamekeeper, lies at Squire Lilford's door. Shot by poachers; but Reuben holds proof that it was a trap, and the squire wrote the letter to bring him there. Motive, the black-eyed Dinah, thus left widowed and free.

On Zed's passionate nature the poison of suspicion and jealousy works with a violence that bids fair to serve the desperate ends of the rogues who are driving him on. Any one but Charlotte must have fallen back on rant and well-worn tricks—it was the original simplicity of her performance that surprised and riveted the most *blasés* play-goers present. And the gipsy's cunning betrays nothing when May and her village companions reappear, primrose laden, and the May Queen, called on to choose a partner for the village feast at the farm, refuses Hob and Dick,

and chooses Zed, her old playmate; he leads her off, the rest follow, Lionel looking on, and the act ends as it began, in Arcadia, but for the Arcadians.

Ask a soldier in the thick of the action how it is going, but not a player half-way through a first night. There was Miss Hope, usually cool as a cucumber in the green-room, looking for nervous excitement nearly as dangerous as Zed on the stage. Davenant, for once pre-occupied with his part, had actually noted no more about the Duchess and her daughter than that they were remarkably attentive. Francis Gifford was one to seem caustic and cool whilst being led to execution, yet he freely owned afterwards he could never think of that evening without a shudder. For he had invited us all, and Mr. Danvers besides, to a supper at the Métropole, "in a moment of madness," said Beattie Graves to me in an ominous whisper. "If the play fails—which it very well may yet—why, a corpse might as well preside at his own funeral feast."

Tableau II., the chestnut tree in full blossom, took the house by storm. Many, who never noticed when real chestnuts flowered, or dreamt of stopping to admire them, were ravished by the scenic representation. The plot thickens, and the audience are on tenter-hooks of suspense lest such a nice engaging young fellow as Lionel should turn out such a consummate scoundrel as it would appear was the old squire before him.

Zed, playing into the rogues' hands, has possessed himself of the particulars of their secret. Only love holds revenge in check, and if by a lover's appeal to May he can yet prevail over his hated rival, Reuben and Jethro will be cheated of their tool. So he pours out his whole heart to the girl, who has never thought of him but as a foster-brother.

Box B. had been so tranquil awhile that our apprehensions on that score were half forgotten; when just at this point—the thrilling point, when Zed has made a tremendous confession of the love that has grown up with him and possesses him, contrasting the strength of his passion with Lionel's light wooing, the point where Zed's rescue from crime and Lionel's life seem to hang on May's reply—somebody in that box sneezed aloud. Such a terribly comic sneeze!—and at a moment when, had the audience laughed, I, nay Charlotte Hope herself, must have been fatally disconcerted. Fear for a moment froze my lips, as I listened for the laugh; it came not, and the panic subsided in an instant. Engrossed by what was passing on the stage, the spectators had positively not heard the sound so terrifying to the players.

Zed's passionate wooing is in vain; May's heart has gone beyond recall to her high-born lover. The gipsy's strange threats are scouted by Lionel with haughty defiance; and maddened by resentment, Zed throws in his lot with the Lilford haters. The

old squire is reported dying, and Lionel called suddenly away. The plot now threatens his life, should he return, and Zed is drawn in by a last hope that by working on May's fears for her lover he may force her to renounce him.

Tableau III. September morning; the trees and woods in russet autumn tints. Squire Lilford is dead, and Lionel, returning to the manor to-day, unsuspecting of danger, encounters Zed. The gipsy, who has failed to extort anything from May, who discredits his wild talk, violently denounces the dead squire to his son as a murderer, and Lionel himself as May's betrayer.

On his own head recoils the bolt. Lionel holds from his dying father a paper containing the vindication of the accused in the written and witnessed confession of the real culprit, Dinah Forrest.

She wrote the pretended letter from the squire that brought her husband to his doom. One among the poachers was a gipsy tramp with whom she desired to return to her tribe, but the vagabond was killed by a chance shot in the fray. The squire suspecting Dinah, she threw herself on the mercy of one who had loved her long ago. He spared her from justice, requiring her to leave the country and Forrest's child, whom he desired to be brought up among honest people, ignorant of his mother's crime. Her confession to be used only in case of need.

Lionel's own acquittal is equally complete. To-morrow all the village shall know that May Aston is his wedded wife, made his in all due though secret ceremony three months ago.

An untoward incident here threatened us with dire disaster. Davenant, excellently suited in the part of the light-hearted, amiable, kind, rather shallow young squire, had a curious metallic ring in his voice at the rare moments when, forgetting himself, he raised it too high. An unnoticeable trifle, but that immediately a grotesque mimicking echo broke from Box B. Now I felt if they imitated me I should die on the spot. An hour earlier the trick might have served its end, but by now the audience were emphatically on our side against the opposition. "Turn him out!" The pit gave the word, and the offender only escaped summary ejection by prompt disappearance. Thenceforward we feared nothing more.

Tableau IV. Evening. In this final scene, Zed, though inextricably entangled by his ruffianly associates in their designs on the life of his successful but, as he now knows, honourable rival, is smitten by a tardy remorse. Lionel has a last tryst with May this evening under the chestnut, and will come first to the tree. But fatal accidents happen sometimes, and every one knows the young squire's careless way of carrying firearms. To-morrow all will know how he stumbled coming through the copse, and his gun went off and killed him.

Reuben and Jethro are in ambush in the brushwood; Zed, concealed in the dell, is to give the signal of Lionel's approach by

throwing a stone into a pool. They have no suspicion of the struggle going on in his mind, and fierce jealousy has prevailed over his better nature, until it is too late to stop the shot from being fired that will free the hand of May.

The plash of a stone is heard, a figure seen advancing towards the trysting-tree; the shot is fired with fatal effect. The time to rush up, drop the squire's gun, abstracted from the manor, beside their victim, and to make off, unaware of their mistake. For as the terrified May hurries on from the one side, up the dell comes Lionel, alive and unhurt. The victim is the gipsy boy, driven by a generous impulse of repentant heroism to save his rival's life by the sacrifice of his own. Zed dies, but soothed by the forgiveness of the lovers.

The fall of the curtain was followed by an uproar that bespoke a success of the sort no one is ever so audacious as to anticipate. Criticism was nowhere. Time to-morrow to discover that there was nothing in the play, after all, to justify the impression made, and that, apart from some pretty scenery and rustic colouring and clever writing, the sensation produced was due entirely to a character written expressly to display the peculiar powers of an exceptional actress. Enough that it was an extraordinarily successful play. The chief dramatic honours were for Charlotte Hope, of course; but amid the deafening applause that greeted us as we passed before the curtain not the least share fell to the astonished and trembling young person who at the last moment had been substituted for a popular favourite in the part of the heroine, May.

Behind the curtain reigned an excitement no less intense.

"A hit, a palpable hit," said Beattie Graves, bringing down his hand with a patronizing slap on Gifford's shoulder.

But as he spoke he looked at the actress whose performance to-night by its startling realism and pathos had thus carried the spectators out of themselves, as we all felt, and Mr. Gifford was the first to declare.

"You have added a new figure to the stage," he said, with more demonstrative earnest than his wont. It was the fact, but the creation had been at a great cost. She heard plaudits and compliments without pleasure, her overstrung nerves made of every feeling a pain. Inured though she was to a pretty incessant strain on the emotions, now and then some fresh and exceptional effort, as to-night, would leave her half distraught.

"You look tired," said Davenant compassionately, whose exertions were not of a kind to tax him over-severely. She threw an odd glance at him.

"I could commit a murder," she said, forcing a laugh at herself, but beginning to recover her balance.

"Try supper first, at the Métropole," said Mr. Gifford.

"Danvers will meet us there in half an hour, and I've seen some one else I think I must invite."

The instant I re-entered the green-room after changing my dress I was accosted by a familiar, but unexpected voice.

"Good evening, Miss Adams. I really must congratulate you on the progress you have made. You played extremely well, let me tell you."

It was Mr. Slater. Great was my surprise. Merely from his tone it appeared how I had risen in his estimation. Always friendly, to-night he was courtesy itself, and kept me talking, questioning me about the parts I had acted, till at length Miss Hope, for whom we were waiting, joined us.

"How you come swooping down upon us like a hawk!" thus she greeted the new-comer, who answered her knowingly:

"Hawk, eh? Come to pounce on you all and carry you off? I don't say no. We'll talk about that as we go to the Métropole: you, Mr. Gifford, and I, and——" I verily believe he was going to offer me his arm, but I pretended not to see, as I took Mr. Romney's, which chanced to present itself at the same moment.

"Who's that fellow?" asked my cavalier, with marked disapproval, as we followed the others down the road leading to the Métropole.

"Not so loud. I'll tell you all about him. But be careful, I warn you. Be very civil to him."

"Civil to that low-conditioned—cur? As impudent a cad as I ever came across."

"Hush, hush! What can you mean? He's a London manager. All London managers are nice, kind, polished, discriminating gentlemen," I remonstrated laughing.

James Romney chimed in unwillingly with the laugh. "Well, he's a party I'd rather not have dealings with. What does he want here?"

"I don't know," said I mysteriously, "but I can guess."

"Seems almost as if you were glad to see him."

"Perhaps I am," said I cheerfully. "Perhaps we ought all to be. We shall know by-and-by."

For I rightly guessed he had a plank of deliverance to offer to our manageress. Without admiring Mr. Slater, I thought Mr. Romney's epithets exaggerated. Indeed I was so elated, so foolishly happy all round, that I saw everything in the sunshine. As to Mr. Danvers, who joined us on the stairs at the Métropole and placed an enormous bouquet in my hands, my heart went out to him as a sort of stage-deity, (it was my first bouquet) though I was more flattered than gratified by his next move, which was summarily to usurp the place of my partner.

Scarcely were we shut into the room reserved for our party when the door burst open, and to the astonishment of everybody in rushed Annie Torrens impulsively, an enchanting picture, with

her auburn hair, brown eyes, and white shoulders gleaming startlingly through the black lace and net of a coquettish dress, and with a general air of Froufrou repentant come back to the fold.

"Where are they? where are they?" she cried excitedly; then hastening up to the author of the "Greenwood Tree" she took his hand, saying effusively:

"Mr. Gifford, I *must* congratulate you. A glorious success, I hear. Don't suppose I bear malice because of our quarrel. Will you, can you forgive me for being so tiresome, now I own I was in the wrong from the beginning?"

Gifford—all present, indeed—tempers sweetened by triumph, heads dazed by her brilliant appearance—succumbed to her humble apologetic attitude. He shook hands with a good grace.

"You did make me angry," she went on with easy frankness, "and after the way I behaved you had a full right to give the *rôle* to Elizabeth—to the bathing woman—if you chose. Just say I'm forgiven. I don't ask for the part back again, only for by-gones to be forgotten."

"There, there," said Slater advancing, "I knew you'd make it all right. Now you're the very person I wanted to see." Annie, mournfully giving him one hand, resumed, holding out the other to Miss Hope:

"Charlotte, I'm very sorry to have caused you trouble and annoyance. There—that's all I came to say. Now I must go back to my party. Dear, how merry you all look!" and she glanced wistfully round. "Don't heap coals of fire on my head by inviting me to supper. I couldn't stay, either."

Of course we invited her, and of course she stayed. At table a place of honour was assigned me, between the millionaire and the manager. Mr. Romney was far away at the other end, next to Annie, who, as one still somewhat in disgrace, submitted meekly to this order of things.

Mr. Slater made no secret of his business among us. The success of the piece had determined him to make Miss Hope a good offer for her rights in it, which her entangled position forced her to close with at once. Henceforth Mr. Slater would take the command, and in a week we should leave Plymstone for a tour in the provinces under his generalship. The actors had everything to gain from this change of paymaster, only Annie, demurring, inquired what was to be done about the part of May.

"Because, after all, if the new piece is to be the chief attraction on tour, it would be positively disadvantageous to me to be left out of it."

"What I shall propose," rejoined Slater, "is that you and Miss Adams shall act the part alternately, till one of you voluntarily surrenders it."

"I cannot object to that," said Annie. The matter dropped,

the general conversation broke up, every one conversing with his neighbour, Mr. Danvers with me.

"How about *him*?" I heard Miss Hope ask of Slater, aside, designating Mr. Romney.

"What, the amateur? His engagement is by the week, isn't it? Tell him he won't be wanted any more."

"He's clever, you know," she urged.

"So much the worse. He'll be wanting to play leading business."

"Can't you find a berth for him somewhere?" she asked with helpless compunction.

"Quite impossible, my dear lady. I never take amateurs, as you know, without a good round sum down. Send him about his business. It isn't stage business," and he laughed drily. "I'm a business man, and I fancy he and I won't agree."

"Eh, is it Romney you're talking of?" struck in Mr. Danvers innocently. "You'll not keep him now. He's a young man of family, you see, and his family want him back, and he's off. I know the ins and outs of it. He came down here for a bit of fun, which is all very well in its way. Now he's had his fling out, sees he must have done with funning, and home he goes."

"Much the best thing he could do," the three concluded in chorus.

Through the gaiety that possessed me, it struck home—the dismal assurance! First, Mr. Romney would leave. Worse, he would leave willingly, having fallen out, at first sight, with our future manager. Worst, he was going home to forget what, after all, had only been funning. He looked far from unhappy at this moment, with Annie beside him, who had never paid him the slightest notice before, making the most unblushing efforts to be charming in her way. Of course I wasn't jealous. Of course I knew her ways must repel him as vulgar; and surely her arts were transparent! Was it possible, in reason, whilst seeing through an artifice, none the less to be swayed by it? At nineteen I thought not. Yet he seemed well amused, and not displeased by her advances. No girl of spirit would mope out of pique. I must try and make myself pleasant to chatty, cheery Mr. Danvers, who was all affability. Slater, my other neighbour, kept one ear upon us almost as though he were my guardian, but only spoke to chime in, in our own vein. My spirits rose, though I was anything but gay at heart. Supper over, the smokers, including Miss Hope, flocked out on the wide balcony facing the sea. Just inside the open windows I sat on an ottoman, when Annie came to nestle beside me. Mr. Romney, about to step out on the balcony, had halted between her and the window.

"Lizzie," she began in a light mischievous tone, "you're a deep girl. Little Bulstrode told me of the set-down you gave him the other night. How we laughed! I thought you were

simple. I did you injustice." Leaning her head towards mine, she whispered confidentially, "You fly high, dear. Pretty well played, I declare, for a chit like you!"

"I am perfectly unconscious, Miss Torrens, to what you allude," I answered aloud, stiff as buckram, and very angry already. I had no secret confidences with Annie, and preferred that Mr. Romney should know it.

She shrugged her pretty shoulders expressively. "Oh, well, if you'd rather," she retorted maliciously. Suddenly looking up at him, she went on in playful appeal, "Now look here, Mr. Romney, isn't it hard? Ever since we came down have Charlotte and I been trying as hard as we can to captivate the *Cresus* of Plymstone. Not a word or a look has he got for either of us, and at last we know why. It's this child here has appropriated him as her special admirer. I call it rough upon Charlotte and me. Don't you think so, Mr. Romney?"

"What does Miss Adams say?" he replied with decided constraint.

Miss Adams said nothing; she was too indignant, and a little hurt by his manner. She did the worst thing she possibly could—looked daggers at Annie and avoided looking at Mr. Romney at all.

"How he came out at supper!" she continued. "Do tell us how you manage. For my part, I can never find a word to say to him. Give me a lesson, dear, in the art of difficult conquests."

"You require no teaching," I retorted provoked. "As for the arts of conquest, easy or difficult, I leave them to—to—other people."

Had I not seen her all supper-time trying her mean arts on Mr. Romney in brazen fashion? and it stung me not to see him treat them and her with the lofty contempt I vow they deserved.

Annie, leaning across, whispered mysteriously with looks of soft mischief, "Isn't it conquest when you wheedle a thousand pounds out of a middle-aged gentleman as if it was sixpence, to help a middle-aged lady-bankrupt out of a scrape? Why didn't Charlotte ask for herself?"

"It was only five hundred!" No, I didn't say that. She might be making random shots to drive me into some unguarded admission that would satisfy her curiosity as to how Charlotte had extricated herself from her plight.

"Do you know what you are talking about?" said I simply, looking her full in the face. Baffled but unabashed she replied;

"Perhaps my informant was mistaken. But in that case, Lizzie, take you care. No flirt like an old flirt, you know. To-night he's all attention to you, but this very afternoon he was drinking tea in his garden with a young lady, Mr. Romney tells me."

"Mr. Romney tells you?" I repeated perplexed. Then it flashed

on me who had been the visitor, whose card had been brought to Mr. Danvers during our interview: Mr. Romney—calling, doubtless, to consult him about his home affairs, and who had known then no more than myself who the other visitor was. He knew now; my countenance disguised nothing. Annie burst out laughing, exasperating me afresh. I had promised Mr. Danvers to keep his counsel, so could explain nothing, nor just then would I have stooped to explain if I could. Once again Annie bent over me with mocking looks and that whisper which drove me frantic.

"Oh, you sly little person! Perhaps you'll deny it now?"

"I deny your right to ask questions," I said hotly and aloud. Throwing herself back on the sofa laughing, she exclaimed loudly, as in dismay, "Oh, hush, hush, my dear! don't talk that way. What *will* Mr. Romney think?"

"Mr. Romney may think what he pleases," said I deliberately, only preserving decent composure by feigning utter unconcern. "I don't care." I had scarce spoken the words when I repented them, but just then the party trooped in from the balcony and broke up our dialogue.

"Her first success has quite turned her head," I heard Annie declare to her neighbour, who had not stirred. "She hasn't a civil word for you or for me, only for tip-top swells."

There was no more use in being seriously angry with Annie than with a mechanical toy that has scrunched your finger in some of its graceful evolutions. I know it now, but who is quite wise at nineteen? For the remaining half-hour she pertinaciously devoted herself to Mr. Romney, who perversely pretended to be under the charm. Was it all pretence at last? As perversely I feigned to relish the honour of being the object of our patron's rather conspicuous attentions. A perfectly harmless, kindly-intentioned, simple-minded man, I felt sure, was Mr. Danvers.

Nor was I mistaken. He was the very pattern of propriety in all respects, save one, of which I was unaware: a desire to pass for something different in the eyes of the world. Why a worthy old gentleman of respectable tastes and habits should go out of his way to be supposed fast and rakish, and not object to have his name coupled with that of some brazen ballet-dancer, some beauty of light reputation, to this day passes my simple understanding. He gave himself the airs of a lady-killer, and got credit for several perfectly fictitious adventures. Certainly in these cases the ladies concerned did not trouble themselves what was said, whilst in mine he was merely profiting by the chance offered him by a pretty nobody of keeping up his character as a squire of dames.

He never left my side till we parted at the door of the Swan. Then Slater kept me chatting till, ten minutes after, we separated, Mr. Romney and I contending which should say "Good night" with the coolest unconcern. I think the honours were divided.

Alone in my room, too excited to cry, I felt in a fever, and sat up

an hour by the open window—heedless of the chill mists creeping in, and that I had caught cold already in the draughty theatre—longing for the morrow, yet oppressed by a dead certainty it would bring no good thing. Wherever I looked all was ugly and distorted. Annie's shameless spite and assurance, their easy influence on James Romney, Mr. Danvers' patronizing courtesies absurdly misconstrued—no wonder I tripped and bungled—I was walking in a new and altogether a wicked world.

Sunday morning I woke unable to lift my head from my pillow, with a distracting headache, but that was nothing. The mortal illness I felt sure must be coming on declared itself in the course of the day as a bad influenza cold, and towards evening I revived. At six Miss Hope came in to ask how I did.

"Better," said I. "I am going to get up and come down to dinner."

"That's right. There's a rehearsal called for ten o'clock to-morrow. We've a new Jethro. Mr. Romney has gone."

I dared not try to speak; words would have choked me.

"He had a telegram from his sister hurrying him away." She paused and then added, "He'd never have hit it off with Slater, you know. They got to loggerheads this morning as it was. He seemed sorry to leave, but it's just as well"—"*for you both,*" said something in her tone.

There was no choice for me but to betray the utter senseless misery I felt, or else to feign utter indifference, which I did.

"Much the best thing he could do," I said, as they all had said last night.

CHAPTER XI.

A CRISIS.

MISFORTUNE is of some service, they say, and certain it is that disappointment in you and in me has brought forth many a story and many a song which never would have been had you or I justified the expectations entertained of us by lover or friend. Critics, we know, are those who have failed in art and literature; artists very often those who have failed in friendship and love. All the same they would rather have succeeded.

I left Plymstone with my heart not broken but badly bruised. Better cause had I than Miss Alice for melancholy and beholding human nature under a cloud. True, I never declared James Romney the supreme fact of my existence, or dreamt myself for an instant the die on which his universe turned. It was only that he had behaved in a wrong and wounding way and shown how undeserving he was of the predilection I fortunately had *not* bestowed upon him. Had he taken offence at a something or a nothing? Was it "touch of hand, turn of head, vexed him?" as the poet has it. I wouldn't even ask. A pretty reason, in

plain prose. Shallow-hearted boy! He had joined us for fun—good; chosen to pay attention to me for fun—good; and now the fun was over he had gone off in a huff, without so much as a friendly good-bye, or a hint or a sign that he was sorry to say it. Bad. Atrocious! If this is his way at two-and-twenty, what will he be at thirty? A perfect Mephistopheles, I suppose.

One little hope skulked in furtively. He might repent—might write a word. Easy to discover the whereabouts of the Shirley Slater comedy company if you wanted to; easy to remain in ignorance if such was your choice. Alas! he chose the latter.

I could not fold my hands and mope and pine, like a young lady. Our busy life gave me no time. Each day brought more work than it could hold, and if ever ambition's voice spoke with authority and seduction it spoke now. Wasn't the glorious dramatic profession before me, a candidate for its honours now in good earnest? Sentiment was a shadow and a delusion; but stage-success brought liberty, power, fame, ease—so many sterling advantages to set against a dream!

I threw myself into my parts, into other people's parts, into a life of storms—in teacups—as seriously engrossed in its least concerns, in first nights, receipts, cabals, rivalries, bickerings, as though they were matters of stake; vastly more important to us were they than Irish Land Acts or the Eastern question. A six months' theatrical tour seems to imply a lot of change, but we carried our little world about with us, inseparable as a snail and its shell; and many a stay-at-home gets more variety of existence. That world is all-absorbing, whatever the pity of being absorbed in what has, so to speak, only an after-dinner interest for other people. I too was a newly-admitted citizen; with much ado to make the two ends meet, out of a salary inadequate to present expenses; eager to justify my promotion, and with rising confidence in my powers. But public life, if it spreads vanity's wings to-day, is sure to clip them to-morrow.

From Plymstone to Bexeter, where "Zed"—for thus Slater, by leave of the author, who parted from us after the first few performances, had re-christened it—was played Monday and Tuesday, Annie and myself appearing alternately as the heroine, with moderate and pretty equal applause. Wednesday morning at rehearsal Graves came in with two newspapers, one for Annie, one for me. "Here's for you, ladies," he said presenting us with a notice apiece of the opening night.

The *Observer* was the Conservative, the *Gazette* the Liberal, organ of the town; and they were at daggers drawn. Both must unite in praise of Miss Hope. But in the *Observer* I read on as follows:

"Miss Torrens is an ever-welcome favourite. Her inimitable grace and piquancy invested the part of May with a charm that only a finished actress can give. It

was with amazement that on Tuesday we found the *role* assumed by another actress, of crude pretensions. Making every allowance for the timidity of a novice, her obvious inexperience was a palpable blot on an otherwise harmonious performance."

Judge how small I looked! Annie meantime was reading in the *Gazette* :

"On Tuesday, a notable feature, second only to Miss Hope's gipsy, was the impersonation of the heroine by Miss Adams, a beginner, we are told. If so, she showed wonderful aptitude. She seems made for the part of the rustic beauty—the happiest contrast, in her naïve and exquisite simplicity, to the stagey and affected rendering of Miss Torrens, who would do well to relinquish a part pre-eminently unsuited to her thoroughly artificial style."

Beattie Graves had his fun out of the sight of our wry faces, but the game had only begun. It was an insult to the audience, affirmed the *Observer*, in its Friday's issue, when such an accomplished actress as Miss Torrens was in the troupe, to substitute a *débutante*, ignorant of the rudiments of her art. A rich treat to all persons of taste, vowed the *Gazette*, to pass from the tricky and meretricious rendering of the May of Wednesday to the deliciously fresh and unconventional rendering of the May of Thursday. Friday night the theatre was packed—Annie's partizans to a man, for she got a startling ovation. Her "Dearest love" provoked acclamations; and when she said "Lionel, I love you," I thought the house would come down. She was crazy with elation, and I besought Slater's leave to resign the part, Bexeter having so emphatically declared for Annie. "Fudge," was the answer I got, but next night the May Queen was led on feeling more dead than alive.

Amazing! The applause burst forth louder than yesterday. The *Gazette* had sent its army, and my reception was so enthusiastic that the play could hardly be got through. On Monday the paper warfare was simply savage. At night, Annie appearing in the "Little Treasure," I in the "Sheep in Wolf's Clothing," got a reception apiece that the queens of our profession might have envied. Finally on the morrow, when we both appeared in the "Merry Wives," I as Mrs. Ford, Annie as Mrs. Page, the disturbance created by our respective admirers was such that the curtain had to be dropped. We and our talents were the talk of the town.

For the next night or two we chanced not to appear. Meantime the *Observer* and the *Gazette* had started a much hotter quarrel about tithes. When next "Zed" was repeated all went quietly; Miss Torrens and Miss Adams had ceased to attract special remark.

Whether or not Slater, as was hinted, had stirred up the war, to fill the house and advertise the company, it served both effects. At Lynmouth, the next town on our list, we found the house bought out, but no letter from James Romney for me.

I knew now I never should get one. In Miss Alice's place I should have gone into a decline. But I was so strong and so

busy! When you cannot be happy you try to be wise. I must forget James Romney, and not be so silly as to care for any one again. Wasn't I getting on? Hadn't I three guineas a week? Too little by half for my increasing expenses; but if I objected to my salary I should only lose the parts, and not get the money. My position was rising. Annie's jealousy I might take as a compliment. Miss Hope was partial to me, though too politic to show it. Finally Davenant all of a sudden began transferring to me the attentions he was used to bestow upon Miss Torrens!

But Evergreen Edwin's devotion, as Slater facetiously hinted, was merely a matter of form. As the leading actor, it behoved him to be in love with the leading young actress. And some Lynmouth critic, an old flame of Annie's, believing Davenant his rival in her graces, had so fiercely attacked his Lionel Lilford, that the actor in future preferred to pay open court to me, as still obscure, and with no critics on the list of my admirers, which, indeed, was a horrid blank.

I grew sceptical. I lost trust in a great many things. One staunch friend I had in our manager, Slater, who managed us all so adroitly, including Miss Hope, the lion of our menagerie. He watched me on and off the stage very narrowly, and I thought, without conceit, I read approval in his face. My ambition was fired; for my future, my chances all, he held in the hollow of his hand. He gave me valuable hints, was kindly and encouraging, and as the 1st of March, the date on which my engagement and our tour expired, drew nigh, I confidently hoped to be re-engaged shortly, in however small a capacity, and felt grateful to him in advance.

The last fortnight of February found us at Broadgate-by-the-Sea. One afternoon, as Annie, Davenant, and I were strolling on the beach, the talk turned on the imminent dispersion of our company. Miss Hope was specially engaged for a fortnight in Edinburgh, Davenant wanted to take a holiday, Annie had an offer to support Mr. Graves on a starring trip to Ireland. I only had no plans, no prospects. If Mr. Slater dropped me, to whom should I turn?

Just then Beattie Graves came striding along to join us, with an air of such solemn importance that we all hailed him with a "Well, what is the news?"

"Gifford is here," he began. "Come over from some of his grand friends, the Moonstones, of Moonstone Court, some six miles off, where he is staying."

"You might have said it was bad news," observed Annie tartly.

"All news is bad news," said Graves sententiously. "But I've not told you mine yet. Slater sent for him. It's a sudden plan for bringing out 'Zed' in New York. They are disagreed about details, and knocking their heads together to try which is the hardest. Two to one on the manager."

We walked home discussing the *pros* and *cons* of such a trip, especially the *cons*—to save our dignities, supposing we didn't get the refusal—much as a girl runs down the man who might, but she fears won't propose. Davenant dreaded the climate; Annie the crossing; Graves thought he would do better to close with Dublin. Loudest in disparagement was I, whose chance was the poorest. I declared, truly, I had no wish to go to America; less truly, that I didn't think anything would induce me. Five guineas a week and a benefit would have induced me quick enough. And when, after the performance that night, Miss Hope sent me a special message, summoning me to her dressing-room, I was all expectation, and sorely disappointed to find the matter was not one of business.

Dene Abbey, two miles from Broadgate, was the residence of Her Grace the Dowager Duchess of Southwold. Her son-in-law and daughter were there with her, and Miss Hope had been asked by the former if she would organize a theatrical performance at the Abbey in aid of the sufferers from a recent flood. She had seen Mr. Pemberton, and thrown herself into the scheme with characteristic vivacity. She relied upon me, she said, to assist her throughout the affair, which would cost no little trouble. I promised everything, crestfallen and indifferent. What were the Duchess, Mr. Pemberton, Lady Mabel, and their charities to me? It was much more to the purpose that Mr. Slater should engage me to go to America as singing chambermaid. But on the morrow it transpired that all, save myself, had received and accepted the proposal to cross the Atlantic. My services could, and clearly would, be dispensed with.

I played ill that night, feeling all forlorn and utterly cast down. The others were so busy, so airily careless, so full of the theatricals next week at the Duchess's! I had been worried by the free and easy attentions of two of the gilded youth of Broadgate. Who knew but that one might be a local critic, who, if I was rude, might write a cross notice of the play; the other some leader of fashion, with power to fill or empty the stalls and boxes?—empty enough they had been all the week!

Oh, I was feeling savage when the next morning I woke in the dingy little lodging I shared with a young girl who played the old women, and knew that to-day my engagement was out. I spent the morning copying some business papers for Miss Hope. At two I walked to the theatre to deliver them to the manager. I found him alone in the green-room.

"Miss Hope sends you these, Mr. Slater," said I, laying the packet on the table. He made no sign. Why disturb himself to be civil to a no-account girl like me? With a sigh I turned to go. My hand was on the door when he spoke.

"Stay, Miss Adams," he said, and I stayed to hear my doom.

"Of course, you understand," he continued, "that my plans

have been altered by this American scheme. Our provincial tour, which I might perhaps have extended till the autumn, when 'Zed' is to be produced in London, ends here finally—your engagement expires this week." He paused, then added, "Have you anything to say?"

"I wish to thank you for your kindness," I said, more bravely than I felt, "and to ask if you'd give me a line or a word of recommendation that may help me to find another engagement."

"No easy matter for you, Miss Adams, I'm afraid. What could I say for you that would help you much? Only a few months' experience, and a hundred better applicants for the same post perhaps."

It was too bad to flaunt my helplessness in my face, as though I didn't know it already. But I saw, as I had never seen, how slender were my resources. And I had had a taste of prosperity which made the cup of penury more bitter than before.

"What you want," he resumed, "is practice—engagements. But how to get them, my dear? You've no money to pay for them. There are hundreds clamouring to do the work, with friends to back them, and help to keep them before the public; girls with more push than you, more experience, I won't say prettier, still there *are* pretty faces enough. It's a thousand chances to one against you."

I quite agreed with him; and if I held my tongue, it was because I knew if I spoke I should cry. A half-sob did escape; I hoped he hadn't heard it, but he had.

"Don't cry," he said. "Be a good girl, and we'll see what we can do for you."

Now, "being a good girl," I had discovered, is such an enigmatical expression, that his promise did not cheer me particularly. I had been too short with some critic, offended some Lovelace of Broadgate, I supposed. Oh dear, and oh dear!

"Should you like to go to America with us, Miss Adams?" he inquired, in a bantering tone that made me rather wild. Cruel, to jest at my predicament.

"The question isn't whether I should like it," I began, and stopped there.

"But whether I'll take you?" he rejoined quizzingly. "Right. Well, I will—that is, if you'll come on my terms."

The peculiar significance of his manner mystified me outright. The offer did not sound real. He was making game of me somehow.

"I fear you're not in earnest," I said doubtfully. "The company won't require me."

"Quite right, I sha'n't want two Mays over there. But you must admit that you stumbled into the lead rather."

"Yes, I daresay I am not capable of sustaining it, and how

could I manage in New York, where everything is so dear, on my present salary?"

"Yet you wouldn't like to drop into a super again? Once a super, always a super, they say. Well, I don't intend that you shall."

Excellent, generous man! He meant to re-engage me at an increased salary. My heart warmed gratefully towards my benefactor. Gush was not in his line; still some acknowledgment was due, and he looked as if he expected it.

"It is very friendly of you, Mr. Slater," I said sincerely. "If by attention and obedience I can repay you, be sure I shall do my best."

"There, there, don't you be afraid," he said half careless, half coaxing. He stopped, pushed back his chair, drew it nearer, then fixing his eyes on my own, said with a mysterious air:

"How if I were to raise you over all their heads—eh?"

"You're satirical," I replied perplexed.

"No, honour bright. Over all their heads, I say again."

"Miss Hope and all?" I said, trying to laugh.

"Miss Hope and all," he repeated with emphasis.

"Well, I don't know who could do that," I replied, feeling I must be stupid, but unable for the life of me to see the joke.

"I could, if I made you my wife," he said bluntly.

I looked up dumfounded. He met me with a look past all misunderstanding. I shrank, I blushed. A heroine of romance would have darted from the room, banged the door, fled home, locked herself in the solitude of her chamber, and buried her face in the cushions to hide the shame she felt. For Shirley Slater was more than twice my years; his person was commonplace, his temper sharp, and his character generally seemed to me so insignificant that I used to wonder how he had made his way as well as he had. Alas! my uppermost feeling was gratified vanity, at so utterly unexpected a conquest.

My silence, the effect of bewilderment, he took for encouragement.

"You won't expect sentiment from a man of my age, Miss Adams," he went on. "I've knocked about the world till sentiment's been banged out of me. But, or I'm much mistaken, you're vastly too sensible a girl to set store by twaddle. From the first I never lost sight of you and, with training, I think you'll do. But, bless you! you don't understand these things. I do. Now, don't you think you can safely trust your future to my hands?"

I was still too confounded to answer. The decisive moments of your life always take you by surprise. Here was I, a friendless, penniless orphan of nineteen, on the stage, exposed to slights and compromising attentions alike very hard to parry, and ready to worship protection in any lawful shape. On the other hand, he,

the prosperous professional man, to whom she owed her first start, who had helped her through more than one difficulty, and who now in an honest and straightforward manner offered her his hand, and not only security against affronts and fear of want, but a fair and tempting field for her dramatic talents in the future.

Of course I didn't love Mr. Slater, or even like him very much. But why shouldn't I come to like him? Though I had puzzled once or twice over some passing disparaging allusion dropped by members of the company, I knew nothing against him. If I married him I should be his true and faithful wife, and shut my eyes to such failings as I could not amend. Yet if he expected me to jump at his proposal he was mistaken. I remained silent.

"Well," he said, with slight impatience, only half pleased. He *had* expected it.

"I'm so taken by surprise, so disconcerted," I stammered. Another puzzle started up. How word my refusal, if I refused?

"You'll get over that," he said. "My little girl has only to do as I tell her. This is how we'll manage it. We'll just get married up in town on the quiet—for there are one or two who'd be mad if they knew who I was going to make Mrs. Slater, and might as likely throw vitriol at you as not. Once sailed, let all the world know who you are—the queen of the company. When we come back I open the Albatross and you shall have the juvenile lead. There, my little girl, will that suit you?"

I saw my star rise and shine. Once more I stood outside the Albatross. This time it was my name I saw placarded up and down the street. I heard the plaudits that greeted my entry nightly. I stood mute.

"Silence means consent," he said, rising with an air of conviction that rudely brought me down from the clouds. "Now it only remains to seal the contract. . . ."

He had been arguing, and I looking at everything from a purely theoretical, theatrical point of view. He wasn't demonstrative mostly, and I had almost made up my mind to accept the manager, but not the man, against whom my self now rose in sudden open revolt. Instinctively I shrank from his approach. "Shy!" he said derisively, with a laugh that horrified me, with the certainty it carried that no mere words of mine would dispossess him of the idea I was only making a scene. I was dizzy with dismay. Then at that moment one of the stage carpenters put in his head, with a certain mischievous satisfaction and a message that Mr. Slater was wanted immediately. He responded with an oath that startled me, but the business instinct was so strong in him that in the quick perusal of the papers handed in I was forgotten for an instant, and took advantage of it to escape.

No sooner was I safe and alone in the back street lodging than the affair began to assume a very different complexion. Sitting in the dusky, musty little parlour, adorned with clumsy china vases

with paper roses inside, the gasfittings swathed in pink muslin, I tried to think. Sentiment apart, what sufficient reason had I for refusing Shirley Slater? He had personally shown me kindness, and his readiness to unite himself with one in my lowly position was so disinterested that I felt I was a brute not to be touched by it. He was clever in his line, prosperous, influential, and this proved he had heart as well. He had interested himself in my future and welfare, and now wanted to identify them with his own. Gratitude would insure a friendliness that would suffice for domestic content. His name would shield me from the affronts of public enemies or private admirers.

In declining him, good-bye to all dreams of success—of hopeful employment or agreeable existence. From him I should get no more help. I should drop into a super—probably be edged out of the profession by the more pushing—disqualified for more serious callings by having passed a year on the boards. I saw myself driven from pillar to post, toiling early and late for an uncertain subsistence; health breaking down under the strain, good looks clean gone. A lively imagination like mine is a curse. It spares you nothing. I saw myself discharged from the hospital before I was well, reduced bit by bit to the last straits of slopwork, making matches at twopence a gross, waistcoats at threepence a dozen; until some night, unable to make head against the beggary and starvation staring me in the face, I should go down to the em-bankment, and taking off my bonnet and shawl, and folding them neatly aside, plunge into the black flood, to be fished out by the waterman for the sake of the reward, resolutely refusing to go into the workhouse—choosing rather to be found dead on a doorstep from inanition at last!

Young beauty, who married the rich old lord, for the sake of getting a first place in society at nineteen; clever woman of your family who accepted the dullard you disliked and despised—for fear you should die an old maid, say—had not I inducements far stronger than those for accepting Shirley Slater? Are you so very unhappy, I wonder? Can you not laugh in your sleeve at romantic folk who cry shame on you? You, my lady, have your title and your diamonds; you, madam, your brevet-rank in society. Feel for Elizabeth Adams, the waif, the least member of a theatrical troupe, with only herself to look to for support, allured by dreams of dramatic success—when a man, whose name is a watchword in the profession where she would like to shine, does her the honour—not to make love to her, there's nothing in that more than common—but to offer her his hand straightforth, his name and a share in the management! It was Fortune brushing past me, as she never would twice. "Grasp your opportunity boldly," said a voice. No need to seek an interview, to court the personal attentions I dreaded. Hadn't he said himself, sentiment was to be left out? Practical, sensible people, we should learn to under-

stand each other. All I need do now was take a sheet of paper and write a few words he would understand.

I took one. I snatched a pen, it wouldn't write; a second, it blotted the page; a third, I wrote, then rose and flung down the pen. Just then the door burst open and Miss Hope entered tumultuously.

"Liz, I want you to copy these Abbey programmes for me. Printers waiting—they can't read my hand! Why, what's the matter with the girl?" she exclaimed suddenly in a changed tone. I stood before her, hearing without understanding, my eyes starting out of my head, my hair awry, cheeks white. I had frightened myself to death, in fact, by my dreadful dream of the future just now. "Liz, are you ill? Are you mad? Have you killed somebody? Good gracious! child, what is it? Can't you speak?"

The words stuck in my throat, but I strove for a dignified and becoming self-possession.

"I'm just a very little put out," I managed to articulate, in a voice so at variance with my words that Miss Hope laughed aloud.

"Just a little! So I think. Only look like that in the last scene of 'Zed,' and your fortune's made."

"I've been having a serious talk with—the manager," I said.

"Well?" Her tone sharpened; her brows contracted; before her searching, sombre, and suspicious gaze my conscience quailed and I hesitated. "Tell me about it." Her peremptory attack felled you like a sledge-hammer. As my mind was made up she might know all.

"What do you think?" I began with affected nonchalance, sillily. "Mr. Slater, the manager, you know, has asked me to marry him."

"Lord, how she says it!" cried Charlotte. "As if offers of marriage from prosperous managers came in to her every day! How little it takes to turn a silly girl's head. Marry you? So that's his game!"

"Game? it's serious earnest," said I, drawing myself up.

"Aye, that I'll warrant you," she said grimly; then coolly and judiciously, "Well, child, and what did we say?"

"We were interrupted, and I came away," I replied with guilty evasion.

"But we've been writing, I see. Your answer?" Quite coolly she snatched it up and read out:

"I accept your terms.—Elizabeth Adams."

She stared at me and broke into a laugh as she put down the paper.

"A pretty business-like epistle, upon my soul!"

"Sentimental epistles and romantic attachments are for books

and plays," I returned. "You know it as well as I do, Miss Hope. A poor girl with her own way to fight can't trample the honourable offer of an honest man's protection under her feet as if it was dust. She might sit out her life waiting for the ideal of her dreams—if she has dreams. She'll never meet him, and if she did, the chances are he'd have nothing to say to her to which she ought to listen."

"Very fair and very fine," she pursued with unabated irony. "So you are marrying for protection? Just a degree better than protection without marriage, eh?"

"I've to work, Miss Hope," I persisted. "I've to act—I don't know if I've talent, but I fancy I've as much as some who get on. But that's hard, as you know, without friends to support you. Now I don't love Mr. Slater—I don't pretend to, and he won't expect it; but I'm grateful and under obligations to him. I don't suppose he's perfection—he's quick-tempered, I know. But even if I don't love him in the story-book sense, if I marry him I shall never love any one else."

"Little fool!" put in Miss Hope, short and sharp, like a pistol-shot.

"Trust my pride for that," I continued. "I respect myself. He will never have reason to repent his—condescension—his choice of a wife."

Miss Hope's countenance kept changing rapidly, its workings denoting a considerable inward stir—something deeper than mere interest in my concerns could have roused. She scanned me from head to foot with a pitying scorn, doubtfully, then said in the rather dramatic way she had when excited:

"If I thought you knew what you were doing, if I thought the dust hadn't got into your silly blue eyes, I'd just shake hands and say, 'Well done, my little schemer! You've baited your hook cleverly and caught your fish. Good luck to you both.' But you, silly innocent, hiding your head in the grass, then hopping into the bird-lime within sight of the birdcatcher——" She stopped short, then demanded, "How do you know Mr. Slater is an honest man, and means honestly by you?"

"Miss Hope," I pleaded, "I may be silly, but not so silly as that. From the first he has always treated me with respect."

"That a man hasn't insulted you seems to me a poor reason for accepting him as a husband," she retorted with contempt. "Won't do, Liz. There's more behind. You're thinking it's your chance to rise in the world, and that you may never get such another. Don't deny it. I see it in your face."

"I don't deny it," said I fretfully. "But whatever I promise I shall perform, you may depend."

"Bah!" she exclaimed with derision. "As if vowing to jump overboard and not drown made the thing easier. Swear to love and honour a man you're bound to despise and detest in six

months, unless he drags you down first to his own wretched level. It ought to take longer than that."

Her voice, the energy of her manner, struck on you like the strange, not loud, beating of the waves of a lake before a storm. It was dusk in the dusty-windowed, shabby parlour, and the figure of this singular, strong-natured woman seemed to grow taller, the space to be filled by her vehemence and her scorn.

"Poverty is a hard master," said I despondingly, "and most choices we have to make are between two evils, the greater and the less."

"I don't know what'll happen to you if you don't marry that man," she instantly replied; "but I can tell you what awaits you if you do. Misery first; infamy afterwards. And why? Just because you're a right-hearted girl to begin with, and can't walk with him in the crooked ways of life. But you must walk there, you know. Remember :

" 'Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.' "

"Don't be absurd," I said peevishly.

"You think you'll keep out of it—you can't. It's a net that trips and catches you—a poison that eats into your soul—when you find every feeling in you of any worth urging you on to disregard the bond called sacred. If he's dealt fairly with you so far, be sure he had good reasons—selfish, not sentimental. Didn't I suspect it more than once? He won't ruin you, my dear; he may leave you to ruin yourself—when he's made his fortune out of your face."

"Do you take him for a fiend?" I asked incredulously.

"No—he's just a vulgar-natured, mean-hearted, selfish, narrow-minded man, who has herded with those of his own kind till his notions of honesty have become queer. If he were honourable, if he were honest, he wouldn't be where he is now. Why, it's notorious. Nobody respects him; but he's successful, and he's feared. I could tell you a thing or two that would make you stare. But there's no plot. You're just a rare pretty girl, my dear, and there's the whole secret. I know you're something besides; that your head is a good one and your heart even better. But these count for nothing—in his estimate. Say he loves you now, in his coarse sort of way—oh, you needn't shrink; that's not what I mean should frighten you—not all." She paused, then resumed :

"Now, let us look on a little. It's no longer 'a Miss Adams—plays small parts in provinces;' it's Slater the manager's beautiful wife. For you *are* beautiful, my dear—not the piquante, pussy-cat prettiness that disappears with the fringe off and dies at five-and-twenty—but the genuine thing, in the grain. You'll be far handsomer some years hence than you are now, and at thirty in your prime. But don't fool yourself into thinking

that'll give you the slightest influence over Shirley Slater when you've been married six months. The manager's beautiful wife! My lords and gentlemen, come to the theatre, see and be dazzled. He gives you first parts. You're thinking of your acting. They're thinking of the shape of your neck and the dimple on your cheek. So it goes on night after night. You're adored at a distance. He's a perfect dragon, your husband, takes care not to cheapen his wares. It's the outside if he allows you to accept a bouquet from a lord or a bracelet from a millionaire. So on for as long as it pays—a year, perhaps, or more. Time comes when money runs short. Your dresses and jewels must be kept up—your prestige. You're surprised when his surveillance relaxes in proportion as real call for it arises. You are off on a track of which I dare you to tell me where it will lead you at last. Is it only on the stage such things happen? *Facilis descensus Averni*, my girl; which means that ignominy is a step in life you can't retrace. You have lowered your flag of pride before you knew it; and the truth you have now to digest is that he only desires to stand aloof and let you fill the house and his purse by such means as may be. Should you want 'protection' you must seek it elsewhere; he cares nothing for you except as an aid in his professional speculations. Your contempt for him by that time will be so bitter that of all worsts the worst seems to be that you should appear to play into his hands, by continuing to share his existence. Then there comes some one—no hero, and anything but a saint; still, a Hyperion to the satyr by your side—and opens a door of escape from a degrading position. Which side is ruin, pray? Where lies duty, where virtue? That's the bog you have floundered into—past escape now. One day your husband tires of it, and goes to law to free himself—and with right on his side."

"Never!" I exclaimed in a tone of adamant virtue, perfectly sincere.

She answered quietly, in accents of the profoundest pity, "My dear, by that time you'll be in the wrong, as certainly as I stand here. Your only chance is now. Stop. You don't know what you're talking about. I do."

"No woman's life is a path of roses," I said, more stoutly than I felt. "Mr. Slater is not the man to forgive a slight. Left alone, what shall I do?"

"Do? Chicken-hearted girl! Aren't you young, with health and brains in plenty? Don't be a coward and marry a brute, for fear you should go farther and fare worse. You can't. But after all, I talk and talk—yet was I wise for myself, as I want you to be for yourself?"

She stopped short, then began again calmly, distantly at first:

"I knew a girl who gave herself like that, for protection. She

was twenty. She had been on the stage since she was ten. She had met with nothing but humiliations and rebuffs. She was put to act parts she was as fit for as an elephant to act Ariel, and she acted them very ill. Managers told her she would never be fit for the front. She knew they were wrong; but that made things the harder, as she sank in the ranks till she was thankful for a place in the chorus at a third-rate theatre. The ugliest of them was prettier than she, and looked down on her. A gentleman of independent means who frequented the theatre thought he discerned something in her out of the common. He interested himself in her, and the offer he made her of his love she accepted, persuading herself she was doing right. He couldn't marry her legally—he was separated from his wife—and told her a story about it she readily believed. He brought her out as Mliss, the Indian girl, in a dramatic version of Bret Harte's story, and she took the town by storm. After that she had her fill of success—her admirers by the score. But let that time come, and not a regiment of Life Guards can protect you, unless you have in yourself the only perfect protection—love and respect for your husband. How could I love mine, as I had found him? He was violent—he drank—our wretched life degraded us in our own eyes and other people's. By that step I had quickly won eminence as an artist, and forfeited happiness for ever as a woman. You recover your freedom, but never its worth. Your love is a degraded thing, and him upon whom you would bestow it despises it though he courts it. You can never count as his moral equal, never hope seriously to attach him or bring good to his life. Memory, love itself, is a torment—and you could drink or gamble, if nothing else will help you to forget."

She ended with a deep sadness, almost solemn. Then with a quick gesture, as if casting off a weight, she said drily:

"There, now, I've done for you what I never did yet for man or woman—shown you the inside of my heart. Are you worth it, I wonder?"

She was not crying. Could she cry? But the passionate sorrow in her eyes and regret in her tone were worse than weeping. It was I whose tears were falling.

"You're right," I sobbed. "I was wicked to dream of it. I'm as bad as the worst girl that ever sold herself for fine clothes or a title. But I'll not do it, Miss Hope. I won't marry Mr. Slater. Look here, this is what I'll write."

She stood glancing over my shoulder, as I indited:

"I refuse your terms.—Elizabeth Adams."

I got up and turned to her. She was laughing now.

"Gently," she said. "It's no joke for you to affront Shirley Slater. I don't see how you're to say no without affronting him; but no hurry."

"What can I write? I'll not hold out false hopes. That would be mean."

"Don't write at all. Never do. And lest he should misconstrue your silence, I'll write. The best will be to keep you out of his way for the next day or two. Luckily I know how. There's the Abbey theatricals. I'm going to drive over there this moment with Mr. Pemberton; I'll take you along, and have you left there in safe custody under some excuse till we've settled what to do with you." And she wrote off:

"I require Miss Adams' help for the Abbey performances on the 2nd and 3rd," &c., &c. "She desires me to let you know."

"Mr. Pemberton's servant shall take it at once," she said as she folded the note; then looking up at me with a half-comic, half-wistful expression she said:

"Why did you come into the profession, my girl? It's not for those of your make. Need to be harder than that."

"Don't tell me, Miss Hope, there are not good people in plenty on the stage."

"Quite as many, Miss Adams, I am persuaded, as anywhere else," she drily replied. "But say what you like, the life's a cruel puzzle to those of us who think and who feel. Now on with your bonnet, sharp! There's that poor patient Mr. Pemberton waiting for me in his phaeton outside."

I may forget many things, many eventful moments of my life, but never that back parlour at Broadgate. If I shut my eyes now I see it—the faded carpet, the artificial roses, the glass-bangled candlesticks, and in the midst of the squalor Charlotte Hope—with her eloquent face, flashing eyes, and imperious gestures—like a prophetess in fury; if I listen, I seem to hear her tale ringing in my ears.

(To be continued.)



Ye monthe of Aprile. —

Drawn by the late RANDOLPH CALDECOTT.

CHILDHOOD'S MEMORIES;

OR, ONE TOO MANY FOR HIM.

By J. S. WINTER, AUTHOR OF "BOOTLES' BABY," "CAVALRY LOVE,"
"ON MARCH," &c.

"I DON'T think," said Marcus Orford one day to Lester Brookes and Wolfe Austin, "that there is such a dull, dead-alive hole as Pontichestor on the face of the earth."

"Better than Suakim, any way," answered Brookes.

"I don't know—I really don't know. At Suakim one had something now and then to relieve the dead level and monotony of parade and mess, mess and watering-order, watering-order and field-day, which prevails here. Hang it all, there was the constant scare about cholera, to say nothing of enteric fever—and now and then there was the chance of a brush with a few of those miserable black jokers which we called 'the enemy,' in and out of the miserable scrub and stones which they call 'the Soudan.' And then one always had the *hope* of a real, proper go in and smash up of the whole lot of them; and besides, there was always shooting on hand and that blessed old railway to jeer at."

"Seems to me that the blessed old railway did most of the jeering," observed Austin, with a laugh, "especially the Pears' soap business."

"Yes, by Jove, and most of the swagger too. Why, there was one little chap like a shrimp—sort of director-general of everything in particular—who gave one the impression that if he was just let to go his own way, and take his own precautions and make his own arrangements, the whole line would be made to Berber itself, without a hitch or a drawback, while our people were thinking about beginning it."

"Pon my honour," he continued reflectively, "I never heard the little chap enlarging on the situation without my memory turning instinctively to the days when I was going about with a nurse."

"Why?" asked Orford.

"Why? Cock Robin, you know. I never saw Cock Robin personified before.

'Who killed Cock Robin?'

'I,' said the sparrow,

'With my bow and arrow,

I killed Cock Robin.'

"You've got rather mixed, my friend," was Orford's laughing comment. "Cock Robin was killed—'twas the sparrow you meant to liken the director-general to."

"Ah, yes, yes. Any way, he always used to make me think of the ballad," returned Austin coolly; "and whichever it was, he wasn't worth staying in Suakim for—as a study of human nature, you know. I admit Pontichestre is dull; but you can get to town in a couple of hours, and you can get your newspaper."

"Ye—es! Who wants newspapers, though? Jam full of a lot of stale rubbish as to who has been spouting, and how many trees the G.O.M. cut down yesterday. Oh!" stretching his long legs out in front of him, and throwing his arms above his head with a terrific yawn, "if something doesn't happen to break this awful monotony soon, I shall be doing something desperate. And yet—what can one do? Hang it, the old regiment isn't the same since Urquhart went and got himself made a blooming swell of a colonel. 'Pon my word, I never thought I should think so little of Urquhart as I've done since he was made chief."

"Can't see any difference in him," put in Lester Brookes.

Orford looked aside with an air of pity for the other's ignorance.

"Oh, *you* were only born yesterday," he said coolly. "*You* didn't know Urquhart in his palmy days; he's been doing the heavy-father style of business ever since you joined. But he was a good fellow once," with a sigh of regret for the bygone days—days of fearful and wonderful practical jokes, in which Urquhart's fertile brain, Urquhart's grim humour, and Urquhart's imperturbable manner, combined with Orford's dare-devil, headlong recklessness, had kept the regiment not only alive but in a state of unrest, most of anything resembling an earthquake or a tornado."

"Do you remember, Austin—or was it before your day—when Urquhart and Archie and I groomed the colonel's charger with cayenne pepper? By Jove, how the Chief did sneeze! and every now and then, when the pepper happened to get to the skin and touched the old gee-up a bit, he gave a great shake as if he'd been the most blood-and-thunder war-horse in creation, and—pouf! Up went the clouds of pepper into the Chief's disgusted face. Yes, and 'my friend, the Duke,' was down too and sitting like an image or a fate at the Chief's side; and presently the pepper began to spread and the Duke's gee got a taste of it; and then the Duke began to sneeze pretty nearly as bad as the Colonel, and his charger, being the youngest and considerably the freshest of the two, took it very much worse than the Colonel's and began to spin round and round like a teetotum. Lord! I never saw a better joke in my life!—the horse spinning frantically round and the Duke sneezing and spluttering—the Colonel so bad he couldn't attend even to the Duke—and every shake of his gee

making it worse and worse. Lord! it *was* a joke, that!—and the cream of it came afterwards. When we had got rid of the personage, he asked Urquhart what the devil could be the matter with the two brutes? And Urquhart looked at him in his wooden, solemn way, and said he was sure he didn't know; he had heard there were several cases of glanders in the town. *Glanders!* And now Urquhart does the heavy-father style, and hasn't a ghost of a joke left in him. I'll tell you what it is; it's a pitiable sight to see a once right-good fellow in command of a regiment; it's so demoralizing."

He rose up from his chair as he spoke, stretched himself, settled the hang of his sword, regarded the reflection of his face in the pier-glass with a melancholy air, put his forage cap at the proper angle, and went with the clatter and jingle which usually distinguished all Marcus Orford's movements out into the square.

Lester Brookes looked after him in surprise.

"I never heard him grumble like that before," he said at length.

Austin laughed.

"Oh, we may look out for squalls now," he answered. "When Orford begins to find out that a place is simply too slow to live in, he generally sets his wits to work to do something or other to liven it. One of us will suffer before the week is out."

And then he went off into a recital of all Marcus Orford's most brilliant jokes, ending:

"He's been extra quiet of late, so he'll have that as well as the dulness of Pontichester to make up for."

Meantime Marcus Orford was crossing the barrack-square at a swinging pace, his vexed eyes surveying the different buildings in sight with disgust and weariness, his vexed soul going back pertinaciously to the little man at Suakim, who had been wont to recall Wolfe Austin's childish memories in the shape of the little nursery rhyme:

" 'Who killed Cock Robin?'

"There was a nursery-tale," he said to himself as he reached the stable where his horses had their abode, "about a bath-room and some tar. Now, what the devil was that? For the life of me, I can't remember."

There was not a soul in the stable and he went in musing still, punched his horses with a good deal of "Whoa, my man," and "So, so, old lady," then stood still in the stall where his favourite was, and regarded that animal with a stare of puzzled reflection. "What the devil was it?" he repeated impatiently.

But although the beautiful satin-coated person, who rejoiced in the name of Cigarette, and was known in the regiment as the cleverest thing that ever went on four legs, rubbed her velvet nose

against his cheek and looked softly at him out of her languishing eyes, this particular memory of his childhood did not return to him very readily. You see a good deal had happened to him since nursery rhymes and fairy-tales had been the fashion with him. Nor did it return to him much more easily when he had bade adieu to Cigarette and was swinging across the square again, this time in the direction of his quarters.

But it came back in the course of the afternoon, bit by bit, "line upon line," as the little goody book has it, and gradually the whole scheme of a new and brilliant practical joke was built up within the odd store-room which Marcus Orford called his mind.

He never told a soul what his intentions were, but when the idea of a confidant presented itself to him, quoted with a grin a part of the rhyme which had helped to suggest the new *divertissement* to him :

" 'I,' said the sparrow, 'with my bow and arrow,
I shot Cock Robin.' "

So he decided that, although in a general way one of the most sociable men in the regiment, he would shoot this particular Cock Robin without any assistance whatever.

He selected Lester Brookes as the best subject for his operations, partly because that young gentleman, not having been very long in the regiment and having joined very shortly before the Soudan campaign, when Marcus Orford had other things to occupy him than to elaborate practical jokes, had never been honoured by his distinguished consideration in that respect, and it was also partly because Brookes' room was immediately above his own, always an advantage, as doubtless my reader is well aware.

The story which he had recalled with so much difficulty was one in which figured the usual lovely and ill-used princess of spotless soul and all other angelic attributes and a wicked queen step-mother, who by the assistance of the black arts had changed the eleven or twelve brothers of the lovely princess into as many wild swans or geese. There was a long and touching history of how the lovely damsel took a vow of silence while she made eleven shirts out of churchyard flax, thereby laying herself open to the pleasant charge of being a vampire or a ghou, who lived on dead men's flesh, and, greedy thing that she was, sat up at night to eat it, and finally having succeeded in the restoration to human guise of her many brothers, the story winds up with a pleasant but rather grim description of the death of the step-mother queen; how when, attended by all her ladies, she entered her bath-room, she found awaiting her a pit dug beneath the carpet at the doorway—a pit filled with boiling pitch—into which she fell and thus made an end of herself upon earth and her machinations for ever. And this, in a modified form, was the joke (save the mark) which Marcus Orford proposed to prepare for the delectation of his

brother officer, Lester Brookes. It would take days to accomplish. In the first place he had chosen to work single-handed, so that he could have no assistance; in the second, it was a scheme which would require the most delicate care that it might remain an absolute and profound secret.

Of course he was aware from the first that pitch would be an impossible agent for him to employ. For one thing its use would carry the joke beyond even the limits of a barrack joke, and for another, the smell would betray him before the time was ripe for the *dénouement*.

Well, when he came to go seriously into the matter he found that any idea of preparing a literal pitfall for Lester Brookes was quite out of the question, there not being more than the depth of a foot or thirteen inches between the boards and the ceiling of the room below it. This plan therefore he was compelled to abandon, but after much care and deliberation he thought out another which promised to work *even better* when it came to be put into execution. This was to poise an immense tub or rather a zinc pan, immediately over the door, so arranged by means of cords, pulleys, springs, and other appliances that when the unlucky occupant of the room should enter after the trap was set for his reception he should receive the entire contents over his person. Of course there was no question of the joke being either original or particularly brilliant; only to the rather stale original he conceived the idea of adding a plan by which about a hundred Seidlitz powders should come in contact with the water in its descent and go off about Brookes's ears with a fizzing and a spluttering calculated, Orford thought, to scare him pretty nearly out of his seven senses.

In order to get the full effect of the joke and to have it in the most perfect working order, Marcus Orford went in for private rehearsals in his stable, to the astonishment and delight of his groom, who whispered in his chum's ear that Mr. Orford had got some rare joke on, he'd be bound, and who laughed immoderately when he saw the Colonel's mastiff, Zug, come tearing out of the stable, howling and yelling, with his tail between his legs and all his handsome tawny coat seething and boiling like a volcanic eruption.

But Private Stokes, first groom to the Honourable Marcus Orford, did not find the matter quite so funny when *he* had a practical and personal experience of what his master's rare joke must have felt like to the disgusted and astonished Zug. He went slowly and quite without suspicion into his stable one fine morning, intent only on his own business, which happened to be the doctoring of a slightly-swollen ankle caused by a somewhat too quickly obedient "come over" of one of his master's horses. Thus he came in for the full benefit of that same master's elaborate arrangement of zinc pan, cords, pulleys and springs, of cold water

and Seidlitz powders; and when that master saw the big drenched and half-blinded dragoon stagger out into the open, a seething mass of white foam, d—ing and spluttering as he dashed the water from his eyes and shaking his short crop of curly hair as vigorously as ever the mastiff Zug had done, he just rushed off to the privacy of his own quarters, and locking the door, gave way to the most extravagant transports of delighted joy, for his little plan was safe and all his elaborate care and trouble had been brought to a perfect end.

I do not think that it very often happens in this life that a man has the opportunity of not only eating his cake but also of having it. Yet, for a time, that was a pleasure which fell to Marcus Orford's lot; he had the double pleasure of seeing how his volcano worked (by practical application) and of having still the anticipation of how it would work when put into execution for the final trial: the dog had been good, and the man had been better, but it was from Lester Brookes that Marcus Orford expected to extract the richest cream of enjoyment. He had given the most minute and elaborate care to the private rehearsals in the stable, but all that was as nothing to the jealousy with which he prepared every detail, and examined every point, so that there should not be the smallest hitch in the final working.

Unfortunately, like some of the others, he had mistaken Lester Brookes altogether. The unassuming manner and tone which was that young gentleman's habitual form, had deceived him completely, and he was in utter ignorance of the fact—which was the true state of affairs—that he had to deal with a specimen of a long-headed, hard-thinking class, who if not quite so quick-witted as himself, was considerably the most clever at the game of putting two and two together.

Now, Lester Brookes, bearing in mind the words which Wolfe Austin had let drop in the ante-room a few days before, words assuming a distinct air of prophecy, to the effect that the Black Horse in general might look out for squalls now, came to the conclusion that if the regiment in general might be on the look-out for squalls, he in particular, being comparatively a new-comer and entirely a stranger to Orford's little ways of amusing himself and enlivening dull quarters, might, nay, had best, be on the look-out.

Consequently he went on his quiet way, and kept his eye as closely as possible on all Marcus Orford's movements, with the result that he managed to gather exactly of what his newest scheme of amusement consisted, and had the satisfaction even of being able to share in Marcus Orford's enjoyment of Zug's astonishment and fury, and equally to enjoy the sight of Private Stokes as he staggered spluttering and vociferating out of his master's stable.

"By Jove," said Lester Brookes within himself, as he went off

into Pontichester, after having had his laugh out, "it's the cleverest dodge I ever heard of. But I wonder who the devil he means to get the benefit of it? The Colonel, I shouldn't wonder. Urquhart's back-slidings in the joking way seem to have cut Orford to the very heart."

Not for one single moment did this modest and unassuming young man imagine that he was to be the one honoured by all this preparation and elaborate care; and when a few hours later he suddenly grasped the truth, that such was indeed the fact, he honestly thought so little of himself that he considered it neither more nor less than a thousand pities that it should be what he called "wasted" upon him.

"Seems such a pity," said he, as he reached the principal street of the dull little town, "and particularly when I know as much about it as Orford himself. Well, we must see if we can't improve upon that, any way."

Therefore on his way back to barracks, as he happened to run against Colonel Urquhart, who was going in the same direction, he made himself so agreeable to that officer,—who, by-the-bye, was privately of opinion that Brookes was one of the few sensible men the regiment contained,—that they not only walked all the way there together, but parted with a promise from the Chief to come round to Brookes' squarters in half-an-hour's time to see an old engraving which the younger man had picked up in a second-hand shop for a mere trifle a few days previously.

Having parted on this understanding with the Colonel, Brookes betook himself to the ante-room, where he found half-a-dozen of the fellows, among them Marcus Orford, in possession.

Marcus Orford addressed him with a mild urbanity which would have made him smell a rat even had he suspected nothing before; it made several other heads turn in that direction also, and several pairs of eyes met one another with a questioning look, which being interpreted meant: "What devilment is Marcus Orford up to now, I wonder?" and at the same time several minds made themselves up to a resolve that during the next hour or two, where Brookes went they would go, and that whatever might happen to be the devilment which Marcus Orford had in his mind, they would contrive to have their share of the harvest thereof.

And they had it—Marcus Orford, Lester Brookes, and the rest—in a manner they little dreamt of. For presently, when the half-hour had expired, Lester Brookes rose from his chair with an admirably-feigned carelessness.

"Well, I must be off. I bought an old engraving the other day for twopence-halfpenny, so to speak, and the Colonel is coming to my room to see it. I expect he's there by this time."

As Brookes sauntered slowly out of the ante-room, up jumped Orford simultaneously with the others.

"I'm going to my room—got some letters to write," he explained.

It was odd, but the others were all going to their respective quarters with the same intention; more oddly still, although several of them, Marcus Orford among them, had their quarters in the lower corridor, they all seemed to be seeking them in the upper storey, in which Lester Brookes's were situate.

And as he, followed by the others on tip-toe, gained the upper passage, Colonel Urquhart, accompanied by an old gentleman with white curly hair and a smart velvet coat, came up the stairs at the other end of it and turned into Brookes's room.

"Yes," they heard the Colonel say, "Brookes tells me it's a genuine Bartolozzi after Michael Angelo, and he picked it up for seven-and-sixpence in a little broker's place down the town."

"Are there any more?" broke in the velvet-coated old gentleman eagerly, and then there was a yell, a spluttering, and a swearing, the volubility of which astonished even those stalwart and anything but straight-laced dragoons.

"What is it?" asked Orford hurrying up the stairs.

"It's *your* FATHER," answered Austin.

OXFORD MEMORIES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY YEARS IN THE CHURCH,"
"AGONY POINT," &c.

"BUT what is the other reason that these men gain such uninterrupted credit?"

"Because they differ very widely from you in their way of asking it. I have seen you go into a shop, and order things without bargaining for the price, or showing any regard for the cash. "When we observe that kind of carelessness," said an Oxford tradesman to me, "it is quite plain the credit is not safe. No gentlemen are more careful about the cost of things than they who have a certain fund from which to draw, and who look forward to a certain time in which they have resolved to cash up." This is a shrewd remark, and one of which I have observed the truth in many instances. The reason is, that these careless customers feel that they are quite at a tradesman's mercy: they are afraid to think of their responsibilities, or to look their creditor in the face."

"But do you think they know my father is poor?"

"I think that they have no assurance that he is rich. They have trusted you hitherto on the credit of your name and college. But now, seeing you have quickened your pace a little, that all your bills together must make a larger sum than they can risk without better security than your mere name as a gentleman, and finding you at steeple-chases, and £40 added at one fell swoop for the horse you have killed, depend upon it they have conferred together, and suspecting you may not command money for all, every man is in a hurry to get his bill paid first."

"I can assure you I have authority for what I say. "There are no better paymasters than the collegians," said one of your creditors to me last term, "if a man will only credit with care and discretion. If a gentleman orders no more boots and shoes of me than he may be supposed to wear, and if he pays me a small sum occasionally on account, I will allow a balance increasing from ten to fifteen pounds to stand over till he takes his degree, or even longer, in consideration of continued custom from the country. I cannot employ my capital better; of course I must charge a credit price, but this will not pay for four years' credit; nor can any charges pay for such credit, if it extends to a whole bill, and not to a small balance only."

"I must here stop to explain points connected with the credit system. Four years' credit is twenty per cent. deducted from profits. It is evident that a tradesman who gave such accommodation to all his customers must charge at least twenty-five per cent., that is, one fourth more than the ready-money dealer, to gain a livelihood. This, however, is impracticable. The truth is, Oxford tradesmen do not give four years' credit in the general way of business. I remember on one occasion buying an article of a tailor who was a noted long-credit man. He told me, 'Sir, I never dun.' I was almost induced to make a purchase under this assurance, and feeling that I could pay when quite convenient. The result was this: three or four times in about as many weeks I was pestered for orders by a man who brought round fancy patterns for trousers and waistcoats. I was continually importuned not to pay my old debt, but to contract new. 'Of course,' said one of my friends, 'if you want tick—you must keep the bill going, and feed the duns.' At the end of the year, finding I could give no more orders, this long-credit man sent in his bill, 'presuming I had closed my account.'"

This is not a respectable way of doing business, and I am happy to say it is not a common way. Oxford tradesmen feel and openly complain that they are materially injured by such practices. Almost all tradesmen will say that they will give good credit, and that gentlemen may suit themselves. Many tradesmen in every town will say, on particular occasions, "Take this, sir, and I will stand my chance: pay when you please;" but those who specify four or five years' credit as a bait to every customer, and for every order indifferently, are a class of men with whom collegians should be very cautious in dealing. I know, from experience, they do not mean what they say, but sometimes more and sometimes less. One trick is to let a man contract a long bill, and then, on some special pretence, put it in the hands of an accountant, who claims payment at once. Another object they have in view is to extort, through fear of enforcing immediate payment, numerous orders at exorbitant prices. And when they have carried this system as far as they can, they have another, which will be learnt from the sequel.

As every demand creates a supply, where there are many fools there will necessarily be some knaves. The university officers look out so sharply to detect malpractices, that collegians must expect to find the sharpest practitioners among the non-resident tradesmen who visit Oxford only for orders. The growing prejudice against Oxford tradesmen is greatly owing to the success of a set of swindlers, who are more properly to be considered as bill-brokers and money-lenders than regular tradesmen.

"The same bootmaker who let me so much into the secrets of his practice," continued my friend, "added one observation which bears chiefly on your present case. 'There was Mr. Watfield, of

Oriel, by whom I lost £30 This was my own fault. When I heard that he had killed Seckham's horse in a steeple-chase, I ought to have insisted on having my account settled immediately.'

"Again, Nailor, the pastrycook, observed of Bullen, when his father refused to pay his debts, that he would never have trusted him to such an extent had he not observed that when his father came to see him, they went out hunting together. It was very hard, he complained, a man should say £60 was too large a bill for his son to contract for suppers, breakfasts, and desserts, during many terms, when he countenanced his hunting.

"This, and much more conversation of the same kind, opened my eyes. But the question was, how to meet the bills. Many painfully anxious thoughts passed through my mind when I found that part, at least, of every bill must be paid. How to apply to my father for money I knew not: I was certain he would be wholly unprepared for such a disclosure. Besides, the worst part of my difficulty was, that he had often talked in my presence of the unprincipled extravagance of others, when I little thought that my own case was irretrievable. I had said, yes, yes, no, no, and thus seemed fully to fall in with all his opinions. Had he ever asked me the plain question, 'Do you owe money?' I should have said, 'Yes,' or, at all events, I could have truly said, 'I do owe a little, but I hope to set all right soon.' Still, the general impression he had received was such, that my sisters once told me that my father said he learnt from me that I did not owe a shilling. My answer was, 'I never said so; but let him be happy in his error—I do not owe anything to signify.'

"This being the impression on my father's mind, I felt that he would be above measure concerned, because it had always been his boast that I never had told him a lie. However, the bitter draught could not be put aside; and I wrote to this effect—that I was pressed for money, having had the misfortune to kill a horse, valued at £40—that I had also been so imprudent as to omit keeping accounts, and that, therefore, I had otherwise exceeded my income in books and other articles—that if he would oblige me with £100 I would use the strictest economy for the future.

"At the same time I wrote to my sisters, to remove any unfavourable impression, if my father thought that I had deceived him. And here I will declare that, selfish as I may appear to be, if by any sacrifice I could have saved myself the pain of writing that letter, I would have done it with all my heart.

"The above letter was the truth, but not the whole truth; and almost the truth is often the greatest lie that can be told. At least, it is no less prejudicial to a man's reputation. And so it proved in my case.

"The next post brought a very kind letter from my father, with a cheque for £100. He said that killing the horse was an accident,

and he would answer for it that in this instance a dead horse was worth double as much as a live one. As to the remaining sixty pounds, some of it, he was glad to see, was for books, and he flattered himself I was forming a taste for literature; and since I had been at college nearly two years, perhaps he should be thankful I had managed my money so well, especially as I was in the first society. He quite entered into the satisfaction I should feel at clearing off all encumbrances, and beginning as it were over again. He also added some hints on the way to keep accounts.

"A letter from my sister informed me there had been a terrible breeze at home, first, about me, and, secondly, between my father and mother, arising out of one of those most provoking of all remarks, 'I told you how it would be, my dear.' They remarked that the money was very inconvenient; indeed my father had only lately said he could not afford a new pianoforte. However, all had blown over, and his annoyance had turned to compassion towards myself.

"Well, thought I, one thing is plain, my father believes this £100 will pay all; I must economize: come what will, I can never acknowledge that I owe another penny.

"When I began to make the money go as far as possible to satisfy the most clamorous of my creditors, I found that the owner of the horse could be prevailed upon to wait. So this bill, the main ground of my application to my father remained unpaid. Still the £100 was soon fritted away among a number of claimants, without doing much either to allay their discontent or to reduce their bills.

"This was merely stopping a gap—I should say, one of many gaps—and only a temporary stoppage after all. One and all remarked they should be sorry to put me to inconvenience, and trusted I should continue as good a customer as heretofore. Now, for the first time, I found the consequence of having dealt with more than one tradesman for the same article. When I thought of ordering as few clothes or boots as possible, it would occur to me Shanter will be jealous lest Mather should supply my summer clothes, and Refton will be equally suspicious of Baldwin about my boots: to prevent being dunned I must give occasional orders to all: but what then becomes of my resolution to economize? As to stable keepers, every man who wants to ride on a fine day must order a horse just where he can find one left in the stable; so it may easily be supposed that I had some small account with every dealer in Oxford. Their hostlers go the circuit of the colleges regularly every day about breakfast time; and I cannot now help laughing when I think of the group of ugly customers which they formed one morning when I looked out and found three of them together, with one dog-fancier, and a man who would provide either rats to hunt or pigeons to shoot, were besieging my door at the same time. My friends soon told me that I could not think

of stopping: if I ceased dealing with a tradesman, I must close his account in a business-like manner. This proved too true. Still, of the majority of my tradesmen I have no reason to complain. They came honestly for their money: if they were put off their tack by my talking about orders, this was my fault. Certainly I cannot fairly say that there was any attempt to take advantage of my situation by the majority. Still, whenever I gave an order, I was in no fair position to bargain about price; so, of course, my bills went on increasing. At last, however, a new kind of mischief arose to complete my ruin.

"Maunder, whose horse I killed, became very short of money. Fifty-three pounds was the amount of his bill, and an immediate discharge he must have. 'Very sorry, sir—but my creditors won't wait no more nor yours.'

"What was to be done? That my father should be applied to a second time, and on account of the same dead horse which he thought he had paid for, was a thought not to be endured. I had a week to arrange matters, and before the day of payment arrived the following occurrence took place:

"One of the long-credit tradesmen, a money-lender in disguise, who no doubt knew how far I was embarrassed, and might perhaps have heard that I had a small fortune in expectancy, called one morning just as I was going to lecture. I was accordingly about to dismiss him very briefly, when he seemed disposed to stand his ground, put on a placid air, but rather like that of a man who stood on the higher ground of the two, and said something to the effect of 'Wished to settle a little business—some arrangement to propose between you and me, sir. You know, business, sir—something definite.' So saying, he laid down an account of about thirty-five pounds for clothes.

"Some few words escaped me, showing my annoyance and vexation, when he said, 'Be easy, sir; if you knew the gentlemen I see, and the ease and facility of the arrangements which I suggest, you——'

"The fact is, I said, I have a heavy bill for a horse I staked; how to meet it I know not.

"'Indeed! sir. A gentleman of your name and respectability—you never need be at a loss. Allow me, sir, to——'

"Name or not—money's wanted now.

"'Money! true. But your name will raise money which will cover my account and the other too.'

"Suffice it to say, by the evening of that day I had been in communication with a money-lender—his agent, doubtless—and it was arranged that in three days' time I should receive £110, for which I was to accept a five months' bill for £150. In other words, to borrow £110 I paid £40 as interest in advance! Of course this was not concluded till I mentioned all particulars of the land to which I was entitled, and the tenant's name.

"But had I no scruple, you will ask, in assenting to terms so exorbitant? Yes, I saw the matter as clearly then as now, but what was my alternative? If my creditors had been alarmed at the loss of the horse, a second difficulty, to the amount of £75, would cause every debt I owed to be placed in a lawyer's hands. I should have been summoned to the Vice-Chancellor's Court by twenty creditors at least. This would reach the tutor's ear, and my father would be informed at once. To apply to him would be to forfeit his confidence for ever. He would believe me the most shameless of liars, though I can truly declare that my conscience did not accuse me of falsehood when I wrote the letter. I felt I need disclose no more bad news than necessary; and in saying less than the truth, and mentioning the bill for books in preference for others, you may say I meant to deceive and did deceive; still the lie was so far diluted and disguised, that it was almost as palatable as truth. Then that unlucky horse! 'If you intended to pay for it why did you not pay for it?' my father would say; and who is there that has not felt that when an explanation of a fault, however true, takes many words, it is better for his credit to let judgment go by default, for he is sure to be suspected of an artful and ingenious lie.

"Thank God! I hate a lie as much as any man; but experience has shown me that the only guardian of truth is innocence. Once part the virtues, and they lose their strength. Break one commandment, and we may well believe we are *guilty of all*; for we are capable of all. There would not be so many lies told if men were better judges of truth in all its forms and fair proportions. As it is, I truly believe that *all men are liars*, for I observe that all men use their words to garnish their actions, and put the best side of their conduct uppermost; though in life there are so many thousand trivial sayings and doings to one which forms so prominent a stumbling-block as this forty-pound dead horse, that many men live and die with a character for truth, though no more their due than mine.

"The last piece of reasoning which entered my head and quieted my scruples before I put my name to the bill was the following:—This extravagance injures no one's peace of mind but my own. I had rather sign away a thousand pounds than distress my father, after his late liberality, for a penny.

"This thought soothed me, as though I were acting from a generous principle. Still the very name of a bill transaction, and signing my name for money, sounded so ominous in my ears, that it made me nervous in the extreme. Giving a note-of-hand was associated in my mind with insolvency and bankruptcy. I had even an instinctive dread of being betrayed into forgery; and, to say the truth, when I met the bill-broker I had taken so much wine to keep my spirits up, and had so far lost my self-command from protracted excitement, that had some villanous instrument of any

other kind been prepared, I might have signed it, and been made a forger at once.

"Nor was this my only danger, I have since heard that it is a common practice with money-lenders to obtain a signature to a bill, and immediately sue upon it, filling up the date as they please, while they leave their victim in their office, under a pretence of going to fetch the cash. When inquiry is made, the answer is, that the person is a stranger, and has been gone some time.

"A gentleman of my acquaintance was swindled in this manner of an acknowledgment for £400 many years since by the famous Minter Hart. He was obliged to remain in France till that gentleman-like, most accomplished, and fascinating knave (for such he was described to me) died on his way to Botany Bay.

"As I came away from the coffee-house at which I encountered this sharper, I met his friend the tailor. He saw I was nervous, and tried to laugh my concern away. He pretended that the meeting was accidental, and that he knew but little of the money-lender. As I paid him his account of £35, he remarked, 'It is not that there is anything so extraordinary in this arrangement you have thought of, sir; but if I might advise, I would not mention it, for the college authorities are very particular; you would be expelled to a certainty. Any tradesman would be ruined if he were known to have any such dealing. That man does business in town—his visits to Oxford pay him pretty well, though. Do not mention this to your fellow-collegians: still I could mention one of your friends who has had this kind of accommodation more than once. You know Mr. Vallance—doubtless he has not told you, sir.'"

So far I have related the confessions of this ruined collegian in nearly the very words in which I heard them at different times from himself. The remainder I learned partly from his mother and partly from his solicitor.

A widow in her loneliness is a common character in works of fiction; I trust, however, that so interesting a personage will not prejudice the credibility of a tale of simple, though distressing, facts. Richard Lyall's father did not live to hear his son's headlong career, but died, after a short illness, within a few months of the day on which his son would be of age to take his estate. To this time the father had looked forward, in the full confidence of obtaining his son's consent and signature to a legal instrument, making over part of the estate which was settled on him, as the eldest son, for the benefit of his mother and sisters. Richard, notwithstanding, consented to give up the same portion of his inheritance that his father intended to recommend.

Before Mr. Lyall's death, however, the first bill had become due; many other accounts had also been sent in, adding still farther to his embarrassment. That a bill for £150 should be dishonoured, he had learnt, was a very serious matter at all times, and more

especially in his case; because, expulsion threatened him on the one hand, and his father's reproaches on the other. The money-lender was, of course, aware of all these holds upon his creditor, and being also quite confident that accommodation—such is the term for a lift on the road to ruin—could not be very readily procured from any other quarter, he took care to be at hand just at the time that the day of payment had arrived.

“‘Just called to say, sir, that the bill will be due on Thursday—I should not mention it in the common way of business, but college gentlemen are inexperienced, and do not consider that the man who holds a bill does not wait like another creditor.’

“‘The man who holds the bill! Why, you hold it, don't you?’

“‘I hold it! Excuse me, sir;—gone through twenty hands at least, I should think, since it left mine. A bill with such a name as yours, sir, circulates like Bank of England paper.’

“‘This puzzled me quite,’ said Lyall, “for I did not understand the nature of this new kind of debt which I had contracted; but at once all the consequences flashed before my mind, and I said:

“‘Why, then, twenty people at least must know that I have been reduced to the necessity of accepting of this accommodation?’

“‘Certainly, yes, certainly; but quite in the way of business: what of that, sir?’

“‘And any tutor may——

“‘No, sir, no. Allow me: we understand business too well for that, sir. Tutors have no such debts as can cause them to be paid by bills; tutors pay tradesmen, not tradesmen tutors, except that a note may pass back to them in change; and no man pays a bill as small change, you know, sir.’

“‘So far all seemed satisfactory; but it was no longer a mystery why the rest of my creditors had become more and more impatient to have their accounts settled; besides, this money-lender had a direct interest in alarming them, for the purpose of adding to my perplexity.

“‘Good morning, sir,’ he said, making a pretence, no doubt only a pretence, to go: ‘excuse my troubling you, sir, but young gentlemen are apt not to know that the holder of a bill will sue at once if cash is not forthcoming; besides, this is in a banker's hands, I suspect, and then there is no alternative. Good morning.’

“‘Stay—stay; one moment——

“‘I have an engagement, sir. Nothing more, sir; merely that—just in passing.’

“‘Of course I was now resolved on detaining him. Indeed it is really wonderful how eager he made me by this pretended indifference. In a few minutes I had admitted that I was unprepared to meet the bill, and, indeed, that I was in a position rather to increase my debts than to defray them.

"We soon began to talk about further accommodation. He asked me how many months I wanted of being of age. He urged the serious risk he had run from my being a minor; at last, however, he said he would not determine anything at the time, but gave me his address, and persisted in leaving me.

"By the next evening I had a second interview with my tormentor, and in consideration of his arranging to take up this bill for me—it proved to be in his own hands all the while—I had given another bill for £250."

Before the second bill became due, Richard Lyall was called home on account of his father's death: it was then that he completed the settlement to which I have alluded, and found himself possessed, no longer of a mere allowance of £250 a year, but of about £360 a year, from rents of property at his own entire disposal.

It were long to tell, and I know not that I could recollect, the various links in the chain which had thus artfully begun to be thrown around him; but suffice it to say that within three years not one shilling of this estate could he call his own.

But why, it will be asked, did he not immediately inform his solicitor of the extent and nature of his liabilities, and stop the nefarious system at once? I know not; except that when a man feels he is doing a foolish thing, a man of sound sense and the friend of his family is not quite the person to whom he would make it known; besides, young men are very ignorant of business; and when they can state a matter to themselves as a mere question about a hundred pounds more or less, all persons of experience can testify that they too often ruin themselves before they are aware of their danger.

The news that a minor has succeeded to his estate soon spreads, so the money-lender was soon on the way to offer Lyall accommodation on easier terms; because now, as he observed, he had security to give, though the true reason was that he could raise money from other sources. He made very light of the bill which he held, suggested that it should be renewed, and observed that when one of Mr. Lyall's leases fell in, it would be quite time enough to settle.

Relying on the ease and affluence of his circumstances, and finding that he was no longer pressed by any creditors in Oxford, Lyall made repeated visits to town. His great weakness was ambition to be noticed by persons of title. Nothing is more easy than for a young man who is a gentleman by birth, if he has plenty of loose cash, to gain an introduction to what is called high society; though to obtain an honourable footing and terms of respect with the more honourable members of the aristocracy is quite another matter. But out of so large a class there always will be some to whom a good-natured fool or an easy dupe is so useful a character that they cannot afford to be par-

ticular; accordingly Lyall was soon flattered by the signal honour of sitting in Lord ——'s box at the opera, after paying for a dinner for him and his friends at Long's Hotel, not to mention lending him money and cutting in at a game of Van John for high stakes.

Mrs. Lyall, however, was not doomed to remain long in the bliss of ignorance. Her own observation soon convinced her of her son's extravagance, because, as she remarked, "I had for too many years been accustomed to see how far the whole of my dear husband's income would go not to see when Richard must be exceeding his part of it." The first corroboration she received originated in a letter from a tenant of the estate, to the effect that some lawyer, whose name he did not know, had written to ask him the name of the party to whom he paid his rent, and what signature his receipts for rent usually bore.

This letter Mrs. Lyall referred to her attorney, and was soon alarmed with an opinion that her son must be raising money on the security of his estate! Judge, therefore, of her state of mind when she also heard that her son was in London, living at Long's, instead of keeping term at Oxford.

"That very morning," said the anxious mother while asking my advice about her son's affairs, "I put myself in the Lincoln mail, and set off for London, without any more luggage than I could carry in my muff. It was a dark night in February, and about nine o'clock, when I drove up in a hackney coach to the door of Long's Hotel. The waiters looked, as much as to say, Who can you be, all so bold? when, as heedless as if I were at my own door, for my heart was too full to notice their fine liveries, or to pay them half the respect they would look for from a widow in weeds, unattended, in a hackney coach, I hastened at once by them into the house, and then turning round to one of them, I said, with a degree of earnestness that must have astonished them, 'I want your master.'

"They stared, I remember, at so unusual a guest, and did not reply for a moment, but stood looking at each other, when I said:

"'I must see him. I am come on no common errand. I must speak with the master of this house directly.' They seemed startled, as well they might be, by my manner, and in a few minutes the master, or perhaps it was the manager, of the hotel came forward.

"'You have a Mr. Lyall staying here, I believe?'

"'We have, ma'am. He is not at home just now.'

"'Then I must find him—I must wait for him till he comes in. You are surprised, I see you are. Look at me, and you must know I can be no one but his mother. Who else but a mother would seek him out in this way? But it is indeed high time I should.'

"One of the waiters then said he could ascertain where he was

gone. The porter had been sent to secure a box for a party who had dined with him, and that, if I pleased, a message could be sent immediately. So I sent the porter with my card.

"Ah! poor Richard. He told his sisters afterwards that when, in the midst of the merriest part of the performance, the box-keeper put into his hand a black-edged card, with 'Mrs Richmond Lyall, 7, Park Row, Lincoln,' he was more startled than he had ever been before in his life. He soon returned; if he had not, I should have gone after him into the theatre. Meanwhile I asked to be shown into my son's room, and soon found myself waiting in his bedroom. There was a fire blazing away, I suppose at about the rate of a shilling an hour, two wax candles were on the dressing table, and so spacious and handsomely furnished was the apartment that, thought I, Pretty doings, Richard, indeed! your poor father and I never slept in such a chamber all the thirty happy years that we lived together.

"Well, when he came he could hardly look at me. What I said to him, poor fellow, I don't know: a great deal, you may be very sure; but I half laugh and half cry now when I think of it.

"The first thing he plainly uttered was, 'Well, mother, you must have some supper; yes, and a glass of champagne too, to cheer you up.' But I could not eat—I was thoroughly exhausted. At last he talked about my coming up, and said it was so foolish—still, he would pay the journey; but when I spoke of going home, he said he could not leave London—he had so many engagements. Engaged, indeed! I said. Would you have told your poor dead father that? Engaged! You are engaged to go to gaol, at this rate. Richard, my child, come you shall. Though weak in body, I am strong in energy. I have not travelled so many miles in my old age for nothing. I will follow you from place to place. I will alarm the whole town by my determination. It is in vain to tell me of engagements. Well, he soon came to: he saw I was resolved, and felt I had a tie upon him; and next morning, at nine o'clock, he got on the mail, and came home with me, as quiet and obedient as a child."

"There was evidently some good feeling in Richard Lyall." So said his mother's solicitor to me three years after this, when, in talking of the sacrifice his mother was obliged to make from her small income to keep her son from gaol (for his liabilities swallowed up more than the value of his own estate), he said, it is but fair to own, that at the time of his father's death Mr. Lyall would have settled any portion of the property we had chosen to propose.

How £10,000 could be sunk in about three years, I have no space to tell. College debts, which he estimated at £300, amounted to £1,200! But the last blow of all was this—he was tempted to join in bills for two friends, on condition that they

should lend their joint names to him. They fled the country, and he was sued for all. The debts were disputed; but expensive litigation, and such conduct on the part of his first solicitor as rendered it advisable, after three years of legal business, to transfer all the affairs into the hands of a second, swallowed up the whole estate, and left Richard Lyall with all the remorse of having nearly beggared his widowed mother, unable to take a degree, without employment, and dependent on relations of small means, whose kindness concedes what their prudence would deny.

This narrative I would particularly recommend to the consideration not only of undergraduates, but of their parents and friends. I have taken the opinion of many members of each university on the subject of college debts; and the remedies which are suggested are these:

First of all, no legislation will do the least good. Supposing that all debts contracted, not only by minors, but by those *in statu pupillari*, were void in law, I appeal to any university man to say whether they would not be proportionably more binding in honour. Oxford tradesmen, and almost all other tradesmen, give credit on the faith of honour, and not of law. The chief use of the law of debt is to enable a creditor to punish a swindling debtor. It is of very little use against those who will not pay. Certainly very few tradesmen in Oxford would serve a customer if they contemplated the probability of having to sue for payment. The law of debt comes in, when it is used at all, as a mere after-thought, and is very little the basis of credit. Even if it did, to withdraw the protection of law would raise prices, but would not diminish credit.

The remedy against debt is in the hands of parents. Let them accustom their sons to the management of money, by giving them an allowance to find clothes, for instance, and pocket-money together.

Again, every father of common sense should take it for granted, not, as is too common, that his son is not in debt at the end of his first term, but rather that he is in debt. Let him then go to college and ask his son in an encouraging way to tell him the name of every creditor, however small may be his bill; for no debt can possibly remain small long: you must either pay or increase it. Let this be repeated at the end of the third term, and again about the eighth or ninth, and the public will soon cease to be shocked by accounts of college extravagance.

Every undergraduate should have a fixed allowance. Battels should be paid separately by the parents, as also may books, clothes, and wine, so that the calculation may be the more easy. Vigilance on the part of the parent, however, will still be requisite, because when young men feel they have outrun, they will not, without the exercise of some tact and encouragement, send all their bills home.

And lastly, a parent had better either make his son an allowance sufficient to enable him to keep the society to which he expects him to aspire, or else he should keep him away from the university altogether. £230 a year, exclusive of private tutors, if required, furniture, caution money, and fees at entrance and degree, is the smallest sum I would recommend at any college; even £300 a year may be spent without extravagance. This, however, will not admit of any expenditure for horses except a ride, on an average, about once a week. A man of experience might keep a horse on £300 a year, but I would not advise any undergraduate to attempt it; for it is difficult to prevent the society of riding-men leading to greater expenses in many other respects besides horse hire.

With these hints it is humbly hoped that most of the advantages of either Oxford or Cambridge may be secured, and most of the temptations avoided.

THE END.

JUMPED.

A TALE OF THE KIMBERLEY RACES.

CHAPTER I.

IT was in the flush times on the Diamond Fields; those days afterwards remembered, in the bad times which came so soon, with so much wondering regret. In those days every one had made money out of shares and confidently hoped to make much more. Shares and companies were talked about morning, noon, and night; and what more delightful topic for conversation could any one wish to have? for in those days every one held shares, and those shares, independently of what they were in or where the ground possessed by the company was situated, went up every hour, so that, except when a public benefactor did something unusually criminal or eccentric, so giving the Diamond Field public a subject for much interesting talk, no one discussed and no one wished to discuss anything else.

For a short time, however, when the mania was at its very height, shares became a subject of secondary interest, and for a time the forthcoming Kimberley races took its place. With a characteristic unanimity and zest the public of the four camps began to talk, think, and speculate about the races. Passing the open doors of bars and canteens one heard scraps of conversation about weight for age, Newmarket rules, and the home performances of the imported horses which were going to run.

The sporting division scented the carcase from afar, and thought with glee of the abundance of money there was in the camp and the enthusiasm for sport which had come over the public. The big event of the races was the Diggers' Stakes, a handicap, for which the weights were out, and very little admiration was expressed for the wisdom of the stewards who had made it. What with those who knew something about racing and had games of their own to play, and those who knew nothing about it but, though honest and ignorant, were too self-important to stand aside and refrain from taking any part in it, men said that the handicapping was absurd. They said there were only two horses in it which had any chance—Mr. Musters' Our Boy and Mr. Saul Gideon's The Pirate. They were both of them imported horses, and the former had won a race or two in England;

both were four-year-olds. Besides these there was one other imported horse, Captain Brereton's Kildare, and a good many colonial horses. Kildare was said to be lame, and the handicappers had not given the colonial horses a chance; in fact it was hardly a handicap at all, as two favourites carried not much more than weight for age. That evening Mr. Saul Gideon had come into the Claimholders' Club in Kimberley with a glare in his hard black eyes and a twitching of his claw-like hands that might well have warned any one who knew him that he was dangerous. Mr. Gideon was a sport, not a sportsman—anything but that—but certainly a sport. In any pastime on which money could be risked by way of wagering he took an interest. Before the law put down those institutions he had, with great profit to himself, kept a gambling saloon. When prize-fights occurred every now and then, just over the border of the Free State (the P. R. is or was an institution on the Diamond Fields) he had much to do with getting them up, and sometimes would have much to do with settling their issue in a peaceable and humane manner before the men went into the ring. In fact there were few sporting frauds on the Diamond Fields but Saul Gideon had a finger in the pie. He probably only just could tell the difference between a dray-horse and a racer, but he was satisfied he was clever enough to hold his own and win money at racing, and perhaps with reason, for success such as he coveted requires rather a knowledge of men than of horses. The Claimholders' Club was crowded with men who were talking about the races, and Mr. Gideon had not to wait long before they began to discuss the event in which he was interested, the Diggers' Stakes.

"Take moy tip, boys," said Dr. Buckeen, an Irish medical man much given to racing, who in his time had done a good deal to maintain in South Africa the character which Irish sporting men have gained for themselves at home; "there is only one in it, that's The Pirate; never mind about Our Boy and the race he won at Sandown. I know all about it, I was there and saw, and after the race Lord Swellington, who owned the horses that ran second and third, came up to me and said, 'Buck, me boy'—all thim fellows call me Buck—'Buck, me boy,' me lord said, 'be crimes, that wore the biggest robbery I ever wore in.'"

"But Lord Swellington wouldn't say 'be crimes;' he is not an Irishman," said one of the doctor's audience.

"'Deed he did, though, to chaff me; the old divil is always chaffing me, we are like brothers."

"But, doctor, you could not have seen Our Boy win that race at Sandown; you weren't home that year," said another objector.

"Not home that year?" said the doctor, taken rather aback. "That's all you know about it. But never mind, what I say is that The Pirate will win the Diggers' Stakes."

"That's all you know about it, Buckeen," said a tall man with a red nose and a squint, who looked as if he were gazing at the bottles behind the bar though he really was watching Mr. Gideon.

"I will take a thousand to five hundred from any one," said Buckeen, who liked to talk loudly about bets which no one who knew him would think of making or dream of his ever intending to pay.

"Not from me, Buckeen," said the tall man, whose name was Crotty, as he continued to squint hideously while he watched Mr. Gideon.

Mr. Crotty was remembering a little battle at the noble game of poker which he once engaged in with Mr. Gideon. On that occasion he—Crotty—had been dealt four kings; and as at last they showed their hands after much money had been staked, Mr. Gideon had said, "For the first time in my life, believe me—though I have played since I was a lad in California, in '49—four aces." And as he remembered this little episode in his life and watched Mr. Gideon he hoped soon to be even with him.

"Bedad, I must go and see after me patients. I am just murdered be the work I have to do in me profession," said Buckeen, and he swaggered out of the club.

"Well, Mr. Crotty," said Gideon when the doctor had gone, "what will you do about the stakes?"

"Even money against The Pirate," was Mr. Crotty's answer.

"It is odds against my horse. Come, I will take two to one," said Gideon.

Mr. Crotty only shook his head and asked Mr. Gideon to take a drink with him, which offer the other excused himself from accepting on the plea that he had to go and see a man on business. "See you again in half an hour or so," he said, as he left the club to visit several other places where betting men congregated.

However, he found there was not much to be done about his horse; betting men, like politicians, like to know how the cat jumps before they commit themselves to any great extent; and there was a tendency to wait a bit before doing much about "the Stakes."

After half an hour Mr. Gideon returned to the Claimholders' Club, looking more restless and anxious than ever.

"Will you lay me six to four?" he asked Mr. Crotty, who was still there.

"Even money," answered Crotty, who was a man of few words.

For a minute or two Mr. Gideon said nothing, then he gulped down his drink, and clearing his throat said:

"I hate fiddling about with one bet here and one bet there. Will you lay me a good big bet at even money?"

"I am not a millionaire, like you Diamond-Field men," answered Crotty, "but I will lay you an even thousand against The Pirate."

"I will take that," said Gideon.

Mr. Crotty produced his betting book and wrote down the bet "Will you double it?" said Gideon.

"You want to sell me up," said Crotty, "but I will double it," and again he wrote in his book.

Mr. Gideon felt sure that Crotty would go on a little more, but something told him that he had better wait a bit. "I will see Nat first," he said to himself; and he left the club, followed by the inquiring glances of most of the men who were present, for the bet he had made was a large one and excited a good deal of interest.

When Mr. Gideon left the club he got into a Cape cart, and was driven to an hotel near some stables, on the outskirts of the camp.

An undersized man, with a look of Newmarket about him, which South Africa had not erased, who was sitting in the bar of the hotel, got up and went out when Mr. Gideon touched him on the shoulder. Mr. Gideon told him what he had done at the club, and the little man received his news with a long whistle.

"You're so clever, ain't you?" he said, as he eyed Mr. Gideon with unconcealed scorn. "You don't look like a blessed infant with that nose on you, but blessed if you don't be'ave like one."

"You ought to remember your proper place more," said Mr. Gideon, "and let me tell you something you don't know. See here," and he produced a telegram, "Our Boy has broken down."

"And don't you think Crotty knew that? Why, I heard it just now," answered the little man, "and a lot it matters; Kildare will win these stakes."

"He is no good; and he is lame."

"Lame? A party as knows what he sees saw him striding along at Buffelsfontein, where Captain Brereton has him as sound as a bell."

"But my horse can beat Kildare," said Gideon.

"Not weight for age he couldn't, if what I hears is true. Only just now I got a letter from home about him, from a pal of mine. Fit and well, he is the best horse that ever came to this country, and fit and well he is. And your horse don't meet him weight for age, you give him seven pounds; those precious stewards seem to have forgotten all about him," answered Nat.

"What's to be done? What shall I do for all that money? I can't lose two thou', and it seemed so good. Oh dear! oh dear me!" Gideon almost sobbed out.

"Well, it ain't lost yet, guvner. Kildare might go wrong," said Nat Lane with an evil grin.

"Oh, what a blessing that would be. Don't you think now, Nat, something might be done?"

"The captain looks after the horse night and day, nothing could be done on the quiet; but Buffels is a very solitary place to keep a valuable animal like Kildare. Look here, now, suppose you put me on a thou' of that two thou'. I might show you how to save that bet, and make a good bit more."

After a little haggling Mr. Gideon consented to give Nat Lane a thou' if Kildare was made a dead 'un and The Pirate won.

"It will have to be done with a rush if it is done at all, but there is a party in camp just now who can do the job if any man can, and I will go and see him," said Nat. "It's no good your coming, I will drop round to your place afterwards."

Mr. Gideon walked off feeling much out of sorts and out of conceit with himself. His old acquaintance Crotty had got the best of him and had known just as much as he did and a little more when he made the bet. When Mr. Gideon left him Nat Lane walked back into the town, or camp, as it was more often called, though its canvas age was over and it was gradually changing from iron to brick, and turning up a street by the side of the mine, which had already, though Kimberley was not ten years old, acquired a very evil reputation, made his way to a canteen known as the Red Bar. This establishment, which consisted of one room, billiard-room and bar combined, seemed to be doing a roaring business. A perspiring barman was hard at work opening bottles of champagne, spirits, and soda-water, while two very smartly-dressed young women were busy serving the crowd of customers who thronged round the bar, and at the same time carrying on a conversation with a favoured few. The majority of the company had an unmistakable Jewish type of face, but there were men of every other white race there. Few if any towns three times the size of Kimberley could produce such a choice selection of scoundrels as the guests at the Red Bar, and Jews and Gentiles alike bore on their faces a hunted, a bird-of-prey look which denoted that they were at enmity with the honest portion of society. The most conspicuous figure in the place was that of a tall dark man, whose face might have been called a handsome one were it not for his sinister expression, exaggerated by a scar which reached from his mouth to his eye, and seemed to stand out all the more as the drink which he was taking flushed his face. From the way in which he lounged against the bar, taking up more room than three or four men might have done, though there were many men trying to get up to it to be served, and from the silence which was kept when he was speaking and the laughter with which his not over-brilliant remarks were received, it was clear that he was a man who had managed to gain the respect of his associates.

"Bill, I want to speak to you; I can put you on to a good job," Nat Lane whispered into his ear.

"Right; if there are good prices in it, for I want some. They cleared me out at faro properly last night," he answered as he left the bar and went out with Nat Lane. "Now, then, what do you want?" he said when they were outside.

"It's like this: I can put you on to a good game, for I suppose

you're on the same lay up yonder you were always on, and have one or two working with you?"

"Yes, fire away and speak clear," said Bill.

"Well, Brereton has got two or three horses at Buffelsfontein, which would be well worth getting hold of; one of them is worth a thousand pounds almost."

"That's no good game—too risky, and I couldn't get much for the captain's horse. People who buy racers want to know more about them than I tell when I sell a horse."

"That could be managed all right, Bill," said Nat. "If you only got the horse away there would be a good bit of money to come to you. And I take it you would sooner take a good horse than a bad one any day; besides there are the captain's two horses. I think I know how the job could be done."

Then the two men had a long conversation, and it was arranged between them that Nat Lane's acquaintance, whose name was Bill Bledshaw and whose place of residence was a kraal over the border in Bechuanaland near Tawns, where he carried on the fine old-fashioned calling of a cattle-lifter and horse-stealer, should find out when Brereton was going to take Kildare and his other horses into Kimberley and with a party of his comrades surprise Brereton, seize the horses, and carry them over the border.

Buffels Drift was not very far from the border, and there was a place which Bill knew of where he could surprise Brereton and get the horses. As soon as he had got away with Kildare he was to send a messenger back to Kimberley, who would let Nat Lane know that the plot had been successful, and give the confederates an opportunity of betting against the horse, which would be far away when the Diggers' Stakes was run. Bill Bledshaw stood out for a good share of the spoil, for it was a very risky job, which would create much indignation against him on the Diamond Fields and perhaps lead to his arrest; but Nat Lane managed to dispel his scruples and before they parted the two worthies had a drink together to the success of their venture, Bill Bledshaw promising to start the next morning for his head-quarters near Tawns, where he could complete his arrangements and see one "Long Alex," who would work the job with him.

CHAPTER II.

"BY JOVE, no horse in this forsaken country ever galloped like that before," said Jack Brereton, as he stood outside his house at Buffelsfontein and watched Kildare leave his other horse, The Muffin Man, as if the latter was standing still.

Those horses and his pony Nobbler represented pretty nearly all Jack Brereton's possessions, except the money he had already invested on Kildare's chance for the Diggers' Stakes.

After having speculated in claims, diamonds, ostriches, and sheep he had taken to the more congenial pursuit of putting his capital into thoroughbreds, and so far he had not done very badly in that somewhat risky investment.

About eighteen months before, he had bought *The Muffin Man*, a colonial-bred racer, with some money he had made in a lucky digging venture. As he rode and trained his horse himself he was not robbed as other owners were, and had won several races at Kimberley, Cradock, and Port Elizabeth. He had bought *Kildare* with the money made by the other, having commissioned an old brother-officer in England to buy a useful racer that was better than anything in South Africa. *Kildare* was an Irish-bred horse, and had been sold rather cheaply after his former owner had been warned off the turf for having him pulled in a two-year-old race. It was a shame, so Jack's friend said, to send such a good horse to South Africa, but he felt bound to do his best for Jack.

Jack Brereton was about thirty-five, and though he was as active as he ever was, and seemed to take life cheerily as he always did, his years had told on him more than men would at first think.

The last ten years of his life had been spent in the colonies, the five years before that at home in a light cavalry regiment, and very marked was the contrast between them, though the Jack Brereton of the latter days and the former was outwardly much the same man, a little harder perhaps and more able to take care of himself, but the same light-hearted, happy-go-lucky fellow. The colonies are full of men whose lives have gone all askew—misfits well made enough, one would have thought, but all wrong when they are tried on. Jack Brereton seemed to be fit for something better than the adventurer and gambler he had drifted into becoming. There was the making of a good soldier in him, only he had gone to grief somehow and had to sell out.

He was a good deal more shrewd in his knowledge of character and business than many a man who had succeeded on the Diamond Fields by sticking to his work instead of drifting from one thing to another as he had done. He was well liked and to a certain extent admired by almost every one from the administrator of the province downwards, but he never got any appointment, though there were several billets he might very well have filled. Sometimes he had been very much down on his luck, sometimes he had experienced a run of good fortune, but he kept his bad or ill luck to himself and was always in excellent spirits. Every one said he was a good fellow and many half envied his light heart and good spirits. Of late he had lived a good deal out of Kimberley, looking after his horses, and the visits he paid to camp every now and then were the occasion of much revelry; very late hours being kept at the club, where men would sit up listening to his stories and bantering chaff till long past the usual hour for closing that establishment; but for all that men who knew him

best thought they often saw a sad, wistful look in his eyes, and that in his laugh there was an after-sound of bitterness and melancholy.

As he watched Kildare gallop he was full of hope and excitement, and he felt certain that he would win the Diggers' Stakes with him.

"Yes, captain, fit and well, the other horses won't be very near him. But I wish the race were over and won; they seem to be doing a lot of betting on it at the Fields, laying two to one on Kildare, but there are lots of takers. The Pirate's lot have backed their horse for a lot of money, and won't lose it if they can help," said a rough-looking man with a broken nose and scarred face, who was standing by the side of Jack Brereton.

"They will have to lose it whether they like it or not. It's a pity you can't come back to Kimberley with us, I know you would like to see the little horse win."

"Yes, captain, I'd like it dearly, but I shouldn't be let see the race if I did come back; the man I hammered is so blarneyed vindictive that he would have me stuck in quod before I was in camp an hour. You see, his being a policeman makes it awkward. No, when you start I will just foot it in the other direction—Christiana way—wishing you good luck in the race."

"There is twenty pound on for you, Tom, if he wins, remember," said Brereton, as he followed the horses back to their stables.

Tom Bats was a not very excellent character who had once been in Jack Brereton's regiment, and for a short time was his soldier-servant. He was not a bad-natured man, but unsteady, hot-tempered, and pugnacious. Jack Brereton had liked him very well, and he had from the first a wonderful affection and admiration for "the captain." Strangely enough, both of them drifted to the Diamond Fields, where they met again, and very rejoiced was Tom Bats to see his old master. On the Diamond Fields Tom did not become a reformed character; he was straight, as the saying there was, and did not buy diamonds or do anything that was dishonest, but was much given to going on the spree and punching heads, and had on several occasions given the police a great deal of trouble.

Unfortunately, when on the spree he had fallen foul of a policeman against whom he had an old grudge, and had knocked the guardian of the peace about severely, thus making Kimberley too warm for him, and obliging him to start off at once for some place of refuge.

He had turned up at Buffelsfontein, where Jack Brereton gave him shelter and food for some days, and employed him looking after the horses, for Jack was not quite certain that though Buffelsfontein was a quiet place some forty miles from Kimberley, it would not be worth some one's while to pay it a visit and try and get at Kildare.

"Look 'ere, captain," said Tom after Jack had left the tables,

"I think I had better come back with you to-morrow, it's rather a lonely journey for you to take with such valuable property as the horses, and no one but the Kaffir boys with you. I will see you as far as the camp and then turn back again."

"No, you shan't do that; what's the good? It's lonely, but it's as safe a road as any high-road in England; no one will harm the horse when I am by, it's at night that I am afraid of it." Tom Bats felt that this was about true, so he said no more, and settled to leave for Christiana the next morning, when Jack and the horses started for Kimberley.

The next morning Jack started for Kimberley riding his pony Nobbler, Kildare and The Muffin Man being ridden by two little bushmen who were in his service. It was a dreary journey from Buffels Drift to Kimberley, only one or two farm-houses were on the way, and a great part of the road was deep sand through which the horses laboured painfully. Jack had arranged for the horses to be put up at a farm-house on the way, so he took the journey easily enough; and as he rode along a little behind the others, he looked at Kildare and added up the money which he felt confident that he could win with the brave little horse. Kildare was a black horse—not very big. At first sight one would think that he was not quite big enough to hold his own, but any good judge would recognize that he was good enough if he were big enough; and when one saw him stride along one forgot about his being on a small scale.

The Diggers' Stakes would come to about five hundred pounds; besides that Jack had about a thousand pounds in bets for that race, for he stood half of the bet Crotty had laid Gideon. It was hard luck not being able to get odds about the horse, but as several people in Kimberley knew how good the horse was, and that the theory of his being lame which, somehow or the other, had got about, was false, it was necessary to get this money on the race at the best terms they could. Though Kildare had been actually backed for very little by either Brereton or Crotty, for the latter had only bet against The Pirate, he was the favourite, with slight odds laid on him, and it would not be easy to back him to win much at any reasonable price. Still, there would be his lottery, which would come to some five hundred pounds or so more, and perhaps it would be possible to get a little more money on, but it was a pity that he could not make more of a *coup*. There was another race on the record which he hoped to win with Kildare, and he might win the Licensed Victuallers' Plate with The Muffin Man. Altogether Jack hoped, with what he could win and with the price he could get for his horses, which he intended to sell, he would be worth about five thousand pounds after the races. As he watched Kildare stepping along he thought that he would like him home to England and win a big handicap with him, as he believed he could; but his good sense

told him that it would be better to sell the horse on the Fields. With the money that he would have after the races he determined he would clear out of the country, and either go home, where he might get something, or to some other colony. It is ill counting your chickens before they are hatched. As Jack was thinking what he would do with the money he would win he had come to a place where the road ran between some mountains, and where by the side of the road there was a good deal of thick bush. Just there some Kaffirs who were coming from the direction of Kimberley were passing the horses; they looked as if they had been working in the mines and were going back to the kraals up country, and Jack paid very little attention to them. Suddenly he was startled by seeing them close round the two horses, Muffin Man and Kildare, and take hold of their bridles.

In a second he had whipped out a revolver and was riding up to them, when a man with crape on his face jumped from the bushes by the road and struck him a heavy blow on the head with a knob kevvy, which stretched him on the ground senseless.

When he came to again he found two white men with crape round their faces engaged in tying him up with a rope, which they knotted in a way that would puzzle the Davenport brothers. When they had finished they carried him away from the road along a water-course which came down from the hills. He did his best to struggle, but it was no use for he was helpless. As he was carried along he saw that the two horses and his pony were in the possession of the enemy, and the two bushmen were also captive and were being carried off by some of the Kaffirs.

"Now, then, take it easy and keep quiet, or the rope will choke you," said one of the men as he secured Jack to the tree with an elaborated and improved Tom Fool's knot. "Well, you might as well have a smoke, there is nothing like making the best of things," he added as he pushed a cigar into Jack's mouth and struck a light. There was some sense in this, so Jack pulled at the cigar.

"So long, boss," said the man who had spoken before, and after gazing at his workmanship with some pride he walked away with the other. Jack could hear them laugh as they crashed through the bushes, and he thought he heard one say:

"What about Kildare for the Stakes?" Then voices were farther and farther off and he was left alone to himself. Of course he began to try and get out of the knots, but there was no doubt about it that the man who tied him up was a master of his craft, and the rope round his neck tightened when he tried to struggle against the knots. Then he began to shout out, but that was no use; there was probably no one near and the echo of his voice seemed to mock him. Then he kept quiet and tried to enjoy smoking. He might possibly burn the rope with the lighted end of his cigar, he thought; trying to do this gave him

occupation for some little time, but he did not succeed though he could just touch the rope with the end of the cigar, and at last the cigar burnt shorter and he was unable to touch the rope with it, and then he began to cough and it fell out of his mouth. Then he began to think of the wretched plight he was in. The remark he thought he heard made him believe that the object of stealing the horse was to prevent his winning the Stakes; but for all that they would have to pay unless they could prove collusion between the men who had made the bets and the horse-thieves, and that would not be very easy.

Hour after hour passed, and he began to think that if he were only free he would not mind about anything else, though if he lost all his bets, and lost his horses, he would be without a penny in the world—in fact, he would be hardly able to pay his losses. Then he remembered that it was the day the mail-cart passed along that road, and he calculated the time at which it would pass. It was about nine o'clock in the morning when he had been tied, and at about sunset the cart would pass, judging by the time at which it generally left Buffel's Drift. He could not see the road from where he was, and the sand would prevent him hearing the cart as it came along; but as the sun went down and the time for the cart came near, he kept up a shouting, his voice growing hoarser and weaker, as he was afraid, every minute. At last the welcome sound came of some one coming through the bushes, and he heard in Dutch an exclamation of astonishment. It was the driver of the mail-cart who had heard shouting, and fortunately, as there was a passenger in the cart who could hold the rein, had got out to see what was the matter. The man was provokingly slow, staring at him stupidly for a little time and expressing his surprise again and again, but at last he cut the ropes and helped Jack, who was unable to walk, his limbs being all cramped, to get to the cart.

About four hours after they had parted at Buffelsfontein, Tom Bats was taking a spell, having done about ten miles of his journey to Christiana. His thoughts were with Captain Brereton and Kildare and he kept regretting that he was not with them and that he should not be on the race-course to see the horse win the Diggers' Plate. Though he knew that Brereton was very well able to look after himself and his horses, and that when he came into the camp he would have the advantage of sage advice from Mr. Crotty, who was as sharp as most men, he felt somewhat mistrustful. The lot who were backing The Pirate would not stick at a trifle. He knew something of Mr. Gideon. Once when he had been matched to fight a man for fifty pounds a side, that worthy had tried to drug him when he found he would not be squared, and he would be up to the same sort of game with the little horse, he was afraid.

Well, he had better be getting on, he thought, as he knocked the

ashes out of his pipe, and filled it up again. Just then he saw some men riding towards him, along a road which some miles south cut into the road from Buffelsfontein to Kimberley. They seemed to be some white men and some Kaffirs, all on horseback. As they came nearer Tom gave a start, nearly jumped up, but in a second crouched down amongst the bushes.

He recognized two of the men, Bill Bledshaw and Long Alex ; but that was not what alarmed him. What startled him was that he saw that Bill Bledshaw was riding The Muffin Man, while one of the Kaffirs was on Kildare, and another on Captain Brereton's pony Nobbler. It did not take him long to understand what had taken place. Captain Brereton had been robbed, they had got the horses from him and were taking them away to Tawns, where Bledshaw's head-quarters were. Tom felt very concerned about Brereton's fate, for though he did not suppose that Bill would harm him more than he could help, he knew that Brereton would not let the horses go without a fight unless he were taken by surprise ; but even if he were fit and well he would be in a sorry plight, Tom Bats thought, if he did not get back Kildare. "This is Master Gideon's little game," he said to himself, and he thought it would be worth a trip to Kimberley, dangerous though it would be, to have the pleasure of smashing that gentleman's evil-looking face in. There were two white men and four or five Kaffirs, so it was useless to show himself and fight for the horses. Long Alex and Bill were both very awkward customers, and were sure to be well armed. About six miles off there was a place called Gordon, where there usually were one or two of the mounted police, but before he could get there and give information to the police, Bill would have the horses over the border ; and Tom Bats was by no means eager to come across any of the mounted police, for they would most likely recognize him and know about the warrant there was against him.

Near where Tom Bats was resting there was a pool of water, and when the horsemen came up to the place they off-saddled, the two white men throwing themselves down on the ground under a tree for a rest.

Tom Bats' heart began to beat, for he saw his chance when one of the Kaffirs took Kildare and another horse down to the water. He had a heavy iron-bound knob-kevvv, and clutching it with a grip that meant business he sneaked from the bush he was hiding behind to the water, without the Kaffir seeing him. Then when he had got close to the water he sprang up, and was on his man with a rush, dealing him one heavy blow with his stick. In a second he had jumped Kildare's back and was riding as hard as he could in the direction of Gordon. The other Kaffirs had seen him, and as he rode he could hear them shouting out and waking up the white men, and turning round he saw that Long Alex had snatched up a carbine and was pointing it at him, while Bill was

mounting The Muffin Man, to give him chase. Long Alex's bullet whirled unpleasantly near him, but the ground, which sloped down a little, gave him a little cover. There was no saddle on Kildare, though his bridle was on, and Tom Bats, though he had been a trooper in a cavalry regiment, was by no means a finished horseman; still he was able to stick on. Long Alex had run up to the brow of the hill and there he took another shot, it was a long shot, but this time it hit, and Kildare stumbled as Tom let the rein fall loose over his head, as his shattered left arm fell helpless to his side. He was not hit so badly that he could not stick on. Bill on The Muffin Man was sticking to the chase, and he waved his hat and gave a yell when he saw Long Alex's shot had taken effect. Tom Bats felt himself growing weaker every second, and for once in his life he longed to see the cord uniform of a mounted policeman as he rode on, longing to get to Gordon in safety—for the horse, that is to say, but for himself by no means a desirable haven.

"Hullo, that's a nice-looking horse; this looks a queer start, too," Sergeant Brown of the mounted police, who was lounging in the verandah of the one store at Gordon—the rising township of the future, which consisted at present of a farm-house, a store, and some tents belonging to the police, but which had a Market square, a Main street, a Church street, and several other streets, only the houses had not yet been put up—said, as Tom Bats rode up on Kildare :

"Now, then, hold up, man!" he cried out, as Tom fell off the horse's back in a swoon when he tried to get off. "By George, though, I think we want this gentleman; there is a warrant out for Bats, isn't there, Jim?" he said to a police trooper, who was standing by, after he had picked up Tom and brought him into the store.

"Yer right, sergeant, I am the man and there is a warrant; but never mind me, look after the horse—Captain Brereton's Kildare, favourite for Diggers' Stakes; they got Bill Bledshaw to jump him, and I have jumped him from Bill. Look after the little horse; he has been knocked about fearfully to-day," said Tom, getting fainter and queerer as he spoke.

The sergeant gave some orders about the horse, then looked after Tom Bats, whom he saw to be a good deal hurt, and when he was revived a little asked him more about the whereabouts of Bill Bledshaw.

It happened that the sergeant took a good deal of interest in the Kimberley races, and he at once shared Tom Bats' suspicion that Bill was acting for some one else; so thinking it would be a capital thing if those who plotted to get Kildare out of the way were caught in their own trap, he said nothing about Kildare having turned up in the letter he wrote to the authorities, while he wrote another letter, to be opened by either Brereton or Crotty,

saying the horse was safe and did not seem much the worse. After he had sent off these letters by a Kaffir on a horse he started off with two policemen—all the force he had—to see if he could come across Bill Bledshaw.

CHAPTER III.

"It's all right, now go and back The Pirate for what you can get," said Nat Lane, as he came into Mr. Gideon's house, where that gentleman had been waiting for some hours on the day of Jack Brereton's misadventure in a fever of excitement.

"Are you sure he has done it all right?" asked Gideon.

"Certain; I have got this," and Nat showed the other a piece of paper on which the words "Done the job all right" were written. "That's what we settled that he was to write; a boy just brought it me. Now you go and look for clever Mr. Crotty, we ought to have him for a good bit."

Mr. Gideon at once started off to make prompt use of his information. First he went to two men who usually worked with him, and were in this robbery to a certain extent, and commissioned them to back The Pirate and lay against Kildare; then he tried to find Crotty, whom he intended to make his chief victim. They had made Kildare a very hot favourite. In fact, with the exception of The Pirate there was no other horse backed. It happened that Mr. Crotty had gone to the river that day, so Mr. Gideon was destined to be disappointed of his prey, and waited up hour after hour at the club without meeting him, for Mr. Crotty on his return had supper at the house of the men he had gone to the river with, and then had gone straight to bed. After he had been in bed some hours he was roused by a knock at the door of his own house, and opening it let in Jack Brereton.

"They have done us," said Jack, as he helped himself to a brandy and soda, the materials for which were on the table.

"What do you mean? they have not got at Kildare?"

"Got at him? They have got him," said Jack, and he told his story.

Very furious did Mr. Crotty become as he listened to it; he at once came to the conclusion that Mr. Gideon had something to do with it. However, he saw that it would be very difficult to prove any knowledge, and saw that he would have to pay the bets he would lose. They talked for some hours, but were not able to comfort each other or devise any scheme for getting the horse back. Mr. Crotty took his loss very well, and did not, as many a man in his place would have done, blame Jack at all for it. He was a somewhat sharp customer, was Mr. Crotty, by no means scrupulous when he was dealing with outsiders, but he was straight to his

friends, and he really felt as sorry for Jack as for himself, though perhaps his first feeling was bitter anger against Gideon.

"Well, it is no good stopping up all night talking," he said at last, and he got a mattress and some blankets for Jack.

In the morning Jack was woke up by hearing a cry of triumph from Crotty.

The letter from Gordon had come and Crotty had read it. "We have got 'em," he cried as he gave the letter to Jack. They were both delighted; the only question was whether the horse would be much the worse for its knocking about. They came to the conclusion that they would chance that, as the note said the horse was all right, and they believed he could win on three legs. "Then leave me to deal with Mr. Gideon," Crotty said as he dressed; "I will take care to come across him this morning."

That morning it was all over the camp that Bill Bledshaw had jumped Kildare, and great was the consternation amongst the backers of the favourite, and the rejoicing of a section of the Jews who had backed The Pirate. Mr. Gideon was afraid that it would be too late to victimize Mr. Crotty, though for a minute or two as the latter came into the club, looking by no means out of spirits, he felt a little hopeful.

"Well, how's The Pirate?" he said to Gideon.

"Fit as he could be. Will you go on laying against him?" answered Gideon.

"Now why are you so keen about backing The Pirate this morning? Not because you have heard about Bill Bledshaw jumping Kildare?" said Crotty with a grin on his face, "but I think we shall sell you by getting him back from Bill."

Mr. Gideon could not help laughing to himself, the idea of Bill's being persuaded to give up the horse or allowing it to leave him fit to run for the Stakes seemed too absurd.

Then the two had a long conversation, which ended in Mr. Gideon laying the other three thousand to one thousand against Kildare, and stipulating that the money should be staked by that day, as he thought that he would win about as much from Gideon and his confederates as that division would think it worth while to pay.

There was a lot of excitement all over the camp when it was known how Jack Brereton had been robbed. Jack had nothing to say but that the story was true; he took his bad luck as he had taken bad luck before, wonderfully coolly, but to his friends—and most "white men" in the camp were his friends—he imparted the advice not to be in a hurry to bet against Kildare. "The little horse will win for all you have heard," he said.

Most felt that Jack did not speak without reason, and a good many took the odds which the Jews were eager to lay on their horse The Pirate; and this state of things went on for some days, all sorts of stories going about as to the chances of the missing

horse being got back, at which stories Mr. Gideon was very much amused.

It was one morning just a week before the races that he was undeceived, and received rather a rude shock.

"Altogether I stand about ten thousand to five. Some of it I have laid on The Pirate, some against Kildare; Barney and Ike Sloeman have done half as much again between 'em! Where the money comes from I don't know. S'help me, I can't see what they are all backing a horse that Bill Bledshaw has jumped," said Gideon, who was one of a group of people watching the horses gallop on the race-course that morning, to Nat Lane.

"It's just as well for us that there are some fools," answered that worthy.

"Do you think any other horse has a chance of beating The Pirate? I heard something about May Morn."

"Never mind what you hear; that May Morn looks like having a big chance, don't it?" said Nat pointing to a horse that was coming round. "Hullo! What's that Captain Brereton is on?" he added with an exclamation of surprise; "how he comes along."

Jack Brereton was on Kildare, which had been brought into the camp the night before, and even a tyro like Mr. Gideon could see that the game little horse was of a very different class from the plater on the course.

"Now, then, Mr. Gideon, what price Kildare? What price, Bill Bledshaw?" shouted Mr. Crotty, who was standing near with a group of men round him, as he burst into a peal of mocking laughter, in which the others joined.

"The little horse is not much the worse for your kind attentions," he added.

"Curse 'em, but they have done us," said Nat Lane between his teeth. Mr. Gideon turned pale, the mocking laughter of Crotty and his friends maddened him; he was ruined, for the money he had staked represented all that he had in the world; his only hope was that still The Pirate might somehow win, and this hope was a very feeble one.

Shout after shout of laughter came from the men on the course, who seemed all to have been let into the secret by Crotty, and followed by the jeers of their enemies Mr. Gideon and Nat Lane got into a cart and were driven back to Kimberley.

There is not much more to tell of the story of the Diggers' Stakes that year. It was a procession rather than a race, for Kildare won with the greatest ease from The Pirate, while the rest of the field were beaten off. Great was the rejoicing amongst good fellows on the Diamond Fields, and bitter were the lamentations of a certain division of the sharps, who had for once been shorn.

Mr. Gideon paid, for he was afraid if he did not an attempt would have been made to prove that he had something to do with

stealing Kildare, and very anxious was he for some time lest Bill Bledshaw, who was afterwards caught before he got rid of Brereton's other horses, should give evidence against him. It remains only to say that Tom Bats had the pleasure of seeing Kildare win. His arm was well enough to allow him to be brought into Kimberley, and public feeling was so much in his favour as the man who had rescued Kildare from the enemy, that the magistrate took a lenient view of the charge of assault on which he was brought up, and only inflicted a fine, which in a few minutes was raised for him by subscriptions of those who had backed Kildare.

DALRYMPLE BELGRAVE.

COOKERY CLASSES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

ARE THEY BENEFICIAL AND PRACTICALLY WORKABLE?

IT is no doubt rather a difficult matter to say with accuracy what degree of public interest in any great question or subject suffices to bring that question within the range of practical politics, and possibly it is even more difficult to measure the public interest by the modes in which it finds expression. The question which is before us, however, and which may to all intents and purposes be rendered as "What brings cookery or any given subject within the range of practical education?" is no longer a moot point, and may be answered with the utmost ease and clearness. When any such subject has received the sanction of the Education Department, and has been endowed with a grant, it is at once brought within the sphere of practical education, and just as with the political question we should expect to see it speedily taken up by great politicians and statesmen, so in the latter case we should anticipate speedy action on the part of educationists, both theoretical and practical.

Cookery as a school lesson does undoubtedly comply with these conditions, and has taken its place as a part of practical education. It is a specific subject, ranking for girls with algebra, Euclid, &c., for boys, and by a comparatively small expenditure of time—forty hours in the whole school year—each child satisfying the inspector can obtain a grant of four shillings. Yet in spite of this the subject is not taken up in schools to anything like the extent we should expect and wish. Only 7,597 girls obtained the grant during the last year, and though that was a marked increase, yet

a much greater increase might have been looked for. Difficulties seem to beset the subject, and managers are easily daunted, while highly-trained teachers are apt to consider cookery as merely a waste of valuable school-time. Nevertheless, the difficulties, whatever they are, have been overcome or have vanished in some places, and one object of this paper is to show how best they may be met, provided it be once granted that such lessons are likely to be beneficial.

And first, however, we should make it clear that in proposing to give every girl who passes through an elementary school, lessons in cooking, we do not propose to give her in any sense a technical education; we are not proposing to teach a trade. Technical education may or may not have a future before it in our elementary schools, but at present it has absolutely no place there; we must let that alone, though perhaps not for ever. In teaching both sewing and cookery we are not attempting to do any more for girls than is done for boys in teaching them arithmetic and algebra; we are merely setting before us the simplest and truest end of all education, the drawing out and development of the mental powers of the children, and we are using as means to that end, as far as possible, the acquirement of those branches of knowledge which will probably be most useful in the after-life of boy or girl.

Now, while many will admit readily that cookery lessons are almost absolutely certain to be of use in the after-life of every girl, many also assert that they cannot be made to supply mental training, and therefore are not truly educational, and ought not to find a place upon the time-table. This is a complete mistake. In the hands of a competent teacher a lesson in cookery can be, and is, as truly educational as any other lesson; that is, it can be made as good a training for the mental powers, for the observation, the memory, the judgment, the reasoning powers, even the imagination and the inventive faculties. It can also be linked on to other lessons, as geography and arithmetic, at many points, and will vitalize them with what they so often lack, a real interest within the grasp of the learner; it can be made a useful piece of training for hand and eye, and altogether for that too often neglected co-partner of the mind, the body; it directly teaches carefulness, neatness, and cleanliness, and last, though most important of all, as most truly tending to develop the girl's powers and faculties, it is a link between the lessons and the life, between the school and the home, between the two existences (often completely separate) of a girl who has perhaps a wretched, destitute, ill-managed home, and who for hours every day in a beautiful school may be studying branches of knowledge of which her parents do not even know the names. Such a link does good on both sides, and further, while we do occasionally find girls in the upper standards, especially in better-class schools, looking with

contempt upon all manual or domestic labour as completely beneath them, and thinking, if not saying, that the mother who has had no education is good enough for such drudgery, but that they will have nothing to do with it, we may rest assured that there is no more certain cure for such ignorant and mischievous folly than a course of lessons in cookery. This is especially the case when those lessons are given by an educated lady, who by example more forceful than any precept sets forth the dignity of labour, and at the same time by her teaching shows how nearly all branches of the knowledge, rightly so highly valued by the girl, may be brought to bear upon the home life. Of course those cases are of most frequent occurrence in higher-grade schools where the fees are high—we believe that the London Board finds them not infrequently among the girls attending their sixpenny schools; but the contempt and dislike at first expressed generally vanish speedily, and this is one strong argument in favour of the recent alterations in the code, by which it is insisted that in the future new cookery classes opened in elementary schools must be taught by a person specially trained for the work in one or other of the training-schools of cookery open throughout the kingdom. The reason is obvious. If the girls we are speaking of are taught unscientifically by an untrained person, even the best of cooks, they will speedily detect the want of groundwork in her knowledge and the fact that her teaching is merely by rule of thumb, and instead of being in the old phrase purged of their contempt, they will probably be confirmed in the idea that such work is beneath their attention.

But if among these better-class girls we find the cookery lessons thus useful in checking and guiding mistaken aspiration and foolish estimates of the relative values of different kinds of knowledge and labour, what shall we say of their influence among the more destitute children in the poorer schools? The sparkling eyes at the mention of the lesson, the eager answers to the question, "Do you like your cooking lesson?" tell their own tale. "Better nor anything, teacher," is the frequent reply; and the further question, "Have you practised at home?" generally elicits that the enthusiasm is not confined to school, but that the lessons have been carried home and are doing their work there. "Please, teacher, I've cooked Sunday dinner three times." "Please, teacher, I've made bread." "I made father a stew and he said it was first-rate." It is quite the exception if any child has not practised at home. Neither parents nor children object to "home lessons" of this kind, and the interest, pride, and satisfaction of both parties is very pleasant to see. The poorer the school the keener the interest taken in the lessons, and the more readily is the food bought up in penny and halfpenny portions. This so far we have found to be an invariable rule, extending even down to the night ragged schools, where, in Liverpool, cooking lessons

have been given to both boys and girls, and are as highly appreciated by one as the other; indeed, if there were any difference when they came to be examined, the advantage was rather on the side of the boys. Every one of the ragged barefoot urchins, too, had, in consequence of his cooking lessons, decided on a career in life which was somehow to include cooking, such as ship's steward, ship's cook, &c. They might not be able to carry out their desires, but the very fact of having come to such a determination would go far to lift them out of the gutter and keep them from the too common and natural course of growth, from gutter lads into corner men and loafers.

And those who work among the poor where cooking lessons are given bear constant testimony to the extent of the good done. Homes reformed, proper food provided for the sick and for infants, ailing mothers helped in their heavy tasks by the increased handiness and interest of the eldest girl, even though she may be only twelve years old, or less—these are the fruits of cooking lessons properly given. Here is a case in point.

A poor woman was visited to ascertain why her little girl was not at school. The usual story. "He's been out of work eleven weeks, and they (the guardians) won't allow me her school wages 'cause I've only got one of school age, and it's so high at this board school. But I *am* going to send her down to Thomas's schools next week, it's only twopence there."

"She will get cooking lessons there," said the visitor.

"Yes, and that's why I want her to go there. Why, I was up last week at Mrs. Hough's; she was moving, and there—she was called out and I was a-scrubbing the bedroom for her, and when I come down just as she was a comin' in, I said to her, 'Why who's ever got tea?' 'Why, Lina, to be sure,' says she. 'Ever since she went to Thomas's schools and had them cooking lessons, she's a deal better cook nor I am, and as handy as handy. And if you'll believe me, ma'am, there was a bit of meat stewed for the father, and it did smell good, and a mackerel fried as nice as possible for us. And her mother tells me she makes a drop of nice broth for the children out of an old bone as *she'd* have flung away.'"

This is literally true, and "Lina" was a young person who had reached the mature age of eleven and a half when she took her cooking lessons, and was so small that doubts were expressed whether she could possibly lift a pot.

Surely there is little need to doubt that lessons producing such fruit as this are beneficial, and we have also the testimony of many mistresses and teachers to the fact that the children return to their other lessons with renewed zest, refreshed and not wearied by the change of occupation. There is still another point, however, of direct interest to managers. In poor schools the cooking lessons are looked upon as such a treat that not only may

they be used as an inducement to regularity of attendance, but they are so highly appreciated by parents that they are frequently the means of keeping girls at school a year or half a year longer, when otherwise they would have been removed at the earliest possible moment—thus improving the child's education and increasing the general earning power of the school.

If, therefore, we may consider it is proved that lessons in cooking are at least desirable, the question follows, what are the difficulties in the way of their being established in every elementary school in the kingdom? Briefly we may say that the principal difficulties are three in number: First, the teacher; second, the time table; third, the outlay for fittings, utensils, and food; and with these we will deal in their order.

First, then, as to the teacher. There is no doubt that the recent alteration in the code has increased the difficulties of managers in dealing with this point, but we believe the step has been taken with due consideration and in the right direction with regard to keeping the quality of the teaching up to a sufficiently high standard. According to the code of 1885, each girl in the fourth standard or upwards is entitled to a grant of four shillings who has had forty hours' instruction in cookery, twenty of which at least have been spent in cooking with her own hands, in a class of not more than twenty-four scholars, on condition that the inspector reports that special and appropriate provision is made for the practical teaching of cookery, and that the teacher holds a certificate from one of the training schools of cookery.

It must be mentioned here, for it is important, that the word "certificate," as used by the Education Department, represents the word "diploma" as used by the training schools of cookery. No doubt before long this little anomaly may be removed, but the schools have been in the habit of granting certificates to those who merely took courses of lessons without going in for the full training, and nothing but a diploma certifies competency or conveys authority to teach with the sanction of the school.

Now the training-schools of cookery are, practically, South Kensington, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, and Liverpool, where, for years past, teachers have been trained for this work. We have no returns from Edinburgh, but at South Kensington, during the last nine years, 199 teachers have passed through the full training, and at Glasgow, Leeds and Liverpool, which, with some smaller schools, are united under the title of the Northern Union of Schools of Cookery, and the patronage of H.R.H. the Duchess of Albany, 120 teachers have qualified themselves. These schools—at least South Kensington and the Northern Union, are prepared to authorize past teaching, which is of good quality, though the teacher may not have been trained, by sending a visiting examiner on payment of a nominal fee and expenses, who will inspect the teaching, examine the teacher, and report to the committee.

Upon this report, if the work done is thoroughly satisfactory, a special local diploma will be granted. This, however, only applies to good past work, where the untrained teacher has been giving instruction for some years. For the future, no doubt, teachers must take the proper training if they are to satisfy the inspectors.

The forty hours of work required by the code is commonly divided into twenty lessons of two hours each, as a shorter lesson hardly allows the whole process of preparation and cooking of any dish and the necessary cleaning to be gone through. This last is done entirely by the children. The lessons in most cases are alternately demonstration and practice; at one lesson the teacher preparing and cooking before the children the dishes they themselves will cook next day, and at the same time explaining to them the nature and value of the foods and the reasons for the different processes employed, giving them, in fact, a sound scientific basis for the practical and technical knowledge they are acquiring.

In many places the school boards have engaged one or more trained teachers to give lessons constantly in their schools, and to do nothing else. But the wants of voluntary and other schools are met by teachers sent out from the training schools at a certain fee for a course of lessons. Some school boards also adopt this plan—Edinburgh for one. The fee of course varies with local arrangements, each training-school settling its own terms. In Liverpool five pounds and the teacher's expenses is the sum charged for one course of twenty lessons: but this may be proportionately reduced, to a certain extent; for though the code only permits twenty-four children to take part in a practice lesson, there is no limit upon the number present at a demonstration. If space permit, therefore, three classes may be present at one demonstration, and on subsequent days have their practice lessons, and by this arrangement three classes can have twenty lessons each for ten pounds instead of fifteen pounds.

In towns and neighbourhoods where a training-school exists, the difficulty of obtaining a duly qualified teacher is reduced to a minimum; in small towns and villages it is certainly much greater, and can only be successfully met by combination. A teacher can give at least ten lessons of two hours each in a week. If five schools in a district combine to secure her services for two lessons a week each, the expenses will be reduced to the lowest point. Moreover, if, as is often done, one school, in a central position, fits up a class room as a kitchen, and allows classes from other schools to attend there for cooking lessons, the outlay for fittings will be greatly reduced; and by the arrangement of demonstration and practice lessons, already indicated, more than five schools can obtain the benefit of the teacher's services. This is easily enough managed in towns where the children from other schools have no great distance to come; in villages, unless under exceptional cir-

circumstances, it would generally be better for the teacher to visit each school. The teacher would then reside in the neighbourhood for ten weeks, and in that time give a full course of lessons to five schools at least.

The second great difficulty to which we referred is the time table. In Edinburgh, where we are told the education of girls in elementary schools is carried farther than in England, the school board does not work for the grant, and a course of lessons consists only of twenty-four hours. But in the opinion of most persons who have looked into the question practically, forty hours is none too much, and more, not less is desirable, while certainly there are few schools, board or otherwise, which can afford to despise or forego a grant of four shillings a head. Under the Liverpool Board a lesson lasts only one and a half hours, but a course consists of sixty hours, while in the voluntary and other schools the lessons are given exactly as required by the code, with this important exception, that the Liverpool school of cookery, in common with some other training-schools, sets its face against practice-classes more than fifteen in number, considering that number as the outside to which a teacher can really attend while they are actually at work. Both under the board and in the voluntary schools time is now, as a rule, willingly found by the teachers for these lessons, and most usually it is done by omitting higher arithmetic. Any one who has much knowledge of girls, either in town or country, will know how commonly knowledge of that particular branch of education seems to be gained and lost without leaving any apparent traces on the mind, and how, often, a month or two after leaving school, a girl will prove herself absolutely ignorant of the methods pursued in doing the very problems which she herself worked successfully before the inspector. It seems to take no root in their minds, and we may let it go unregretted, when we can substitute for it that which is so immediately and practically valuable to them as instruction in cookery.

And so we reach our last and greatest difficulty—the necessary outlay. This is a difficulty we must frankly admit, but we must assert also that its magnitude has been exaggerated, both by the ideas of persons who have never looked into the matter, and also by the action of some school boards, who have made their class-kitchens absolutely perfect, and in doing so have incurred a great deal of unnecessary expense. As a matter of fact, the primary outlay for utensils, fittings, &c., need not amount to any very large sum. The utensils required for a class of twelve or fifteen girls can be purchased for a trifle under five pounds. An ordinary class-room will serve as kitchen, and boards laid upon trestles, or even along the backs of two benches, make satisfactory tables and are easily cleared away. It is desirable if possible to have a fireplace of some kind, but if that is not to be had a portable gas stove will do all that is required. If the school is to be a centre,

or if classes are to be carried on all the school year, it is advisable that the stove should be bought. It will cost about three and a half to four guineas; if not purchased it may be hired. In Manchester and other places gas stoves are let out on hire for merely nominal sums—one shilling a quarter and upwards. In country villages gas is not always attainable, but an oil stove will answer; or, better still, a cottage kitchen near at hand, with its fireplace and oven, such as the children will find in their own homes, can often be hired for a trifle. To prevent mistakes, however, we may mention here that it has never been found that because a girl had learnt to cook on a gas stove she found any difficulty in cooking on an open fire at home.

Ten pounds will thus, we see, more than cover the primary expenses, which will not recur, even when the stove is to be permanent. The recurring expenses are the teachers' fees and the cost of food. For one course of twenty lessons the food will cost about one pound seventeen shillings, but this is almost always recouped by the sale of the food in small portions at cost price, and sometimes a profit is made. The teacher's fee is almost covered by the grant in a class of twenty-four, but if the managers wisely elect to have smaller classes for the sake of getting more satisfactory results, they can even then cover the fee, either by making a small extra charge to the children for the lessons—say one penny a lesson—or by admitting mothers and friends to be present at the demonstration lessons and making a small charge.

When school managers are really anxious to take up this subject, they will soon find that their path has been cleared, and that such difficulties as remain will be easily overcome; and even poor schools, where the outlay is a great consideration, will find supporters of educational movements ready to help, once they see the good that can be and is being done. In Liverpool, for instance, the Council of Education makes grants to poor schools in order to start the classes.

There are one or two points still remaining to which we would draw the special attention of school managers who are anxious that the children should obtain all possible benefit from the classes.

First, the food cooked and all its adjuncts must be carefully suited to the needs of the children; and the modes of preparation taught and the directions given must be such as they can apply in their own homes. For instance, it is a mistake in giving lessons to very poor children to direct them to use bought sauces for flavouring, or to teach that vegetables for a vegetable soup must be fried in butter. Yet we have heard both these directions given to a class of children from a penny school.

Secondly, it is desirable that the children should have printed recipes, and not that they should spend a large portion of the

time in laboriously writing out the teacher's instructions from dictation instead of attentively watching her proceedings.

Thirdly, it is desirable that cookery should be treated as an elementary science subject. Unless it is so handled it speedily degenerates, the directions given become mere rules of thumb, and the children do not acquire that scientific basis for their knowledge which at once elucidates the knowledge given, furnishes a guide for action under differing circumstances, and fixes the whole in the memory. It is for this reason that the proper training of teachers is so much insisted on. Cases are not unknown where children have learnt cookery from a cook in a kitchen, and domestic economy from a book in school, and the two lessons have never been brought to bear upon each other or in any way linked together in the children's minds.

Lastly, if the work done is to be thorough, and if any general test of efficiency is to be applied at all, it is most desirable that qualified female inspectors should be appointed or acknowledged by Government—one, let us say, to each senior inspector's division—to visit the schools where classes are going on, to inspect the work, to encourage the teachers, and to examine the children.

A. C. M.

ANOTHER MORNING IN FLORENCE.

(DEDICATED TO MR. RUSKIN.)

A DULL grey morning. Melissa, looking out from the tall old house opposite the Pitti Palace, sees damp pavements, damp roofs, and a forest of damp green umbrellas rising up from the cabs on the cabstand opposite. "It is positively too dark for Santa Croce. Ruskin says we must have sunlight," cries Melissa, in her most pessimistic tones.

Hannamoria, the scribe and optimist, comes to the rescue. "Santa Croce won't run away; meanwhile, let us go to Santa Maria Novella, and look at Giotto's St. Anna."

"Very well. Let us start at once."

"I confess I tremble," says Hannamoria, who loves her jest. "What is it your Ruskin says of the St. Anna? 'If you can be pleased with this, you can see Florence; but if not, you can never see it.' Are you prepared to go home if you don't like it?"

"You may laugh at Ruskin," answers Melissa, as she puts on her hat and tucks the precious volume under her arm; "you may laugh at Giotto, if you like. There is nothing to prevent you from laughing at Raphael. I wonder that you don't."

"Your knowledge of the relation of cause and effect seems imperfect," is the Sphinx-like reply, as they go down the stone stairs into the street.

The rain has ceased, and the clouds are lifting, but the Arno flows dull and turgid as they cross the bridge to the Via Tornabuoni—that terribly sophisticated thoroughfare, with its cosmopolitan shops and polyglot shopmen. Melissa forgets her artistic enthusiasm, and lingers at every step; now at a jeweller's, now at a photographer's, now at a tempting old book-stall. A splendid officer goes by, his soft blue cloak falling in statuesque folds about him. "Only an Italian can wear a cloak. What a beautiful people it is," she cries.

From the street corner comes a whiff of violets. Flowers lie exposed for sale on the ledge of a tall grey building—anemones, violets, scarlet Florentine lilies—a mass of delicate colour against the gloom. Melissa stops to buy, and is thoroughly cheated by the dark-eyed graceful salesman, who looks as if he had stepped out of a picture at the Uffizi or Pitti.

Santa Maria Novella is reached at last. They pause a moment to examine the façade, then make their way into the great old

building. Melissa immediately opens her copy of "Mornings in Florence."

"We are to 'walk straight up the church,'" she announces in a loud whisper, "'and go in behind the great marble altar.'"

It is dark behind the altar, and Hannamoria, who is myopic, complains that she cannot see the frescoes, Ghirlandagio's "farrago of tweedledum and tweedledee."

"It doesn't matter much," says Meliassa Consolatrix; "we are only to look at them because they are rather vulgar and make a good contrast to the Giotto's. Now we must ask the sacristan to take us into the Green Cloisters; at least *you* must, for my knowledge of the *lingua Toscana* will not carry me so far."

There is no sacristan visible; but Melissa descries a man engaged with a broom, whom Hannamoria and the polyglot addresses in very choice Italian, to quote her own words and Hamlet's.

Chiostro verde? Yes, he has the key. Will the ladies step through this doorway? He will send the *custode* to them at once.

The great door shuts behind them with a sound that calls forth a perfect orchestra of echoes. The rain has begun to fall, and pours steadily on to the grass-plat, with its central solitary tomb of grey marble; the arching cloisters look dreary enough, with their mouldering frescoes and pavement of tombstones. There is an arched aperture in the wall, big and dark, through which the vaults below can be dimly discerned. "I don't like this place," says Melissa in a low voice, and creeps under the ample wing of her friend.

"We must turn off into this little passage on the right," Hannamoria observes, in her most matter-of-fact tones, "and 'ask for the tomb of the Marchesa Stiozzi Ridolfi.'"

"There is no one to ask," comes the faint response. "I wonder why the *custode* has not come."

"It is much more pleasant without him," Hannamoria answers, as they turn into the gloomy little arcade which branches off from the main cloister; "the frescoes are behind the tomb, in the recess, Ruskin says."

"Look!" cries Melissa, stopping suddenly, and turning pale.

At the furthest end of the passage looms a tall figure, draped, and gleaming very white in the darkness. Motionless it stands, one arm uplifted to the vaulted roof above.

Hannamoria peering through her eyeglass grows a shade less courageous than before.

"It is one of those white monks one sees at funerals," Melissa says as they advance a step or two. "No; it is only a statue, but it is sufficiently ghastly."

"It *is* ghastly," confesses her companion.

A door opens suddenly in an unexpected place; a veritable monk passes across the cloister and disappears behind another door, equally unexpected; he waves the ladies aside and says

something unintelligible as he goes. The mysterious black and white presence seems to belong as little to the world outside as the sculptured effigies on the marble tombs.

The Ridolfi tomb is discovered at last, and behind it, sure enough, are the famous Giotto's—St. Anne in her brown and white bed, St. Joachim at the Golden Gate. Melissa whips out Ruskin again, and vibrates between page and picture as she looks at Giotto alternately with her own eyes and her author's.

Presently, up comes a huge black cat and begins to mew piteously.

"Horrid thing!" cries Melissa with a shudder. The faithful Hannamoria chases it with her umbrella, and it flies to a little desolate patch of grass and shrubs opposite, into which the rain is pouring steadily.

"I wish the *custode* would come," repeats Melissa uneasily. "This is such a horrid place one can't really enjoy the pictures."

"And the light is so bad," laments the myopic one, "it is no good trying to see them properly."

"I think I understand a little what Ruskin means about Giotto, though, don't you?"

"Yes, a little. I think we have seen all we want to."

"Yes; we can always come again."

They emerge into the main square of the cloisters. The rain is falling in torrents on to the grass-plot; every now and then comes an echoing splash as a water-pipe sends an unusually big torrent into the court.

Melissa runs up the steps to the door and fumbles with the latch.

"It is locked!" she says, and turns a little pale.

"Of course it is," Hannamoria answers stoutly; "if we knock the man will come and let us out." She applies her knuckles to the panel, but there is no response.

"Louder, louder," urges Melissa; "they will never hear us through this noisy rain."

Five minutes of fruitless knocking; the great oaken door never so much as shakes.

"Oh!" cries Melissa tremulous, "what shall we do?"

"Do?" says her friend, "why, try the door that the monk came through, of course."

A return to the little cloister of the tombs. More knocking at an unimpressible door; the door opposite is also tried and found locked. Melissa's terrors are growing every minute. At last she sinks down in despair on a flight of steps and buries her face in her handkerchief.

"We shall never get out of this place, Hannamoria, never!"

"What nonsense."

"That man locked us in for the purpose. I see it now."

"Absurd. What motive could he possibly have had?"

"I can't pretend to your charming simplicity. You know what Italians are."

Drip, drip, plash, plash, goes the rain. Miaw, miaw, the great black cat has come near again and lingers about them. He has brought a comrade, a white cat, as swollen and bloated as himself, who peers up at our prisoners with inquisitive countenance. All the doors have been tried and found wanting; that is to say, all are hopelessly shut fast.

Melissa has left off lamenting and sits in stony despair near the main door, which she has ceased to belabour with her umbrella. Hannamoria maintains an iron front, but she does not enjoy the situation. A distant clock strikes two.

"We have been here just two hours," says Melissa in a low voice.

Opposite, above the arcade of the cloister, rise irregular red roofs, and a white plaster wall set with little windows. There is a hopelessly empty and deserted look about it all, but the sight of it causes Melissa's spirits to rise.

"Hannamoria," she says, "I have an idea. We might climb those water-pipes to the roofs and then signal for help outside."

Her friend answers not; why shall she dash this last hope to the ground? She knows that they both shrink at stiles and are hopelessly "stumped" by a five-barred gate, but why mention it?

"Yes," she answers vaguely. "I suppose it is the street outside, I hear sounds of various kinds. If only that door there leading to it were open."

"Hannamoria!"

"Yes."

"That door that you were speaking about—see."

"Well?"

"It has a fan-light—and the fan-light is broken."

"Yes, but it is hopelessly out of reach, and the hope is small."

"There are some chairs in the cloister; you shall stand on one and hold me up, and I will put my head through the fan-light and scream."

"We can *try*, certainly."

But alas, Hannamoria can no more stand on a rickety chair and hold up her friend than she can fly.

"Oh!" cried Melissa, wringing her hands and pacing up and down, "what shall we do? What shall we do? Think of it—in a few hours it will begin to get dark, here in this place, among these tombs, and they are modern tombs!"

"I don't see that that makes it any worse," says poor Hannamoria, at her wits' end.

"Indeed it does," Melissa cries, argumentative in the midst of her woe and panic; "a modern tomb is an infinitely ghastlier object than an ancient one. And those cats! And that figure!"

Meantime an idea seems to have struck Hannamoria. She has

drawn out her handkerchief, and is engaged in tying it on to the handle of her umbrella. In another moment she has remounted the chair and the handkerchief is waving feebly from the fanlight.

"Scream!" urges Melissa. "Yell at the top of your voice."

Hannamoria lifts up her voice, not very heartily, then suddenly is silent.

"The handkerchief has dropped off!"

"Never mind," cries Melissa, seizing the umbrella and tying on her own handkerchief, "let me come." She leaps to the chair, which rocks wildly, pokes the umbrella through the aperture, and gives vent to a prolonged and polyglot wail of anguish: "Help! Aux secours! Inglese!"

For some time her efforts are vain, then a sound of a voice speaking an unintelligible tongue is heard on the other side of the door.

"Inglese, Inglese!" shrieks Melissa, waving more zealously than ever.

Then the voice dies away. Melissa dismounts broken-hearted.

"Some one has come and gone away again."

"Perhaps they will come back with a key."

"No," says poor Melissa, "we are locked in here on purpose. Oh! Hannamoria, can't you understand?"

She strides off along the cloister, leaving her friend by the empty chair. "There is nothing," she thinks, "with which one could kill oneself if the worst came to the worst."

"Melissa!" It is Hannamoria's voice that floats across to her, And what is that that she sees! Is it possible? The great door is bursting asunder, the fissure widens, and outside in broad daylight stands their faithless friend of the broom, grinning all over his handsome face.

But where, he asks, is the *custode*? He had sent him to the ladies immediately. The base man had failed to go.

Well, it did not matter now who had played them false, sacristan or janitor. They fee him joyfully, regardless of deserts, and walk across the piazza with a sense of freedom known only to those who have not always been free.

"Oh! those tombs, I shall never forget them," Melissa says.

"I am very hungry," Hannamoria answers calmly. "I wonder what the *trattoria* man has brought us for dinner."

"It was all Ruskin's fault," Melissa observes irrelevantly.

AN APRIL DAY IN SURREY.

I.

How long ago, my dear ?
Nay, never twenty year,
Since two simpletons went strolling on the breezy down,
While the sun shone on the chalk
Beneath a woodland walk
Where the lad and girl were trampling o'er the beech-nuts brown !
'Twas you and I, my dear,
Though now 'tis twenty year
Since the blue-bells rang to greet us in our young love's prime ;
And the white anemones,
Soft bowing with the breeze,
Whispered of us to the primroses in rhythmic chime.
'Twas then we both confessed,
For blissfulness and rest
There's nothing in the wide world can be half so fine,
As a nut-strewn woodland walk
Above the dazzling chalk,
On an April day in Surrey if the sun but shine !

II.

How long ago, my dear ?
Ah, yes ! 'Tis twenty year.
There's a little touch of frost, my love, on both our sobered heads !
But after grievous pain,
To-day we're young again
Among the pale anemones and primrose beds.
And, oh, my own sweetheart,
I've a secret to impart,
I could not tell you elsewhere if 'twere to save my life !
My darling, it is this :
By your first maiden kiss
You've grown dearer—dearer—dearest—every hour you've been
my wife !
So we, a wedded pair,
Will ever more declare
There's nothing in this wide world can be half so fine,
As a nut-strewn woodland walk,
Above the dazzling chalk,
On an April day in Surrey if the sun but shine !

EXPRESS!

A RAILWAY ROMANCE IN ONE COMPARTMENT.

By JOHN MADDISON MORTON, Author of "Box and Cox," &c.

CHARACTERS.

A LADY.

A GENTLEMAN.

A RAILWAY GUARD.

The action is supposed to take place in a first-class railway carriage, travelling on a certain line between a certain place and another certain place.

SCENE.—*A plain interior supposed to represent a compartment in a first-class railway carriage—door in flat at C.—the entrance—four easy chairs placed two and two opposite the others, representing the seats—on the second chair at L. H. an open newspaper.*

The actor playing the part of the gentleman enters at door C. in light overcoat, with travelling bag, hatbox, and railway rug over his arm; he places the bag, hatbox, and rug on first chair, L. H., and advances, cap in hand, and, after sundry bows, proceeds to explain the scene to the audience.—Ladies and Gentlemen,—the little piece we are about to present to you is supposed to take place in a first-class compartment of a railway carriage, travelling express from—from—Plymouth to London; shall we say Plymouth to London?—very well—Plymouth to London. You will also be good enough to see in the humble individual who is now addressing you, a deputy-assistant-deputy-inspector of Government prisons, returning from an official visit to that well-known and, judging from the constant stream of applications for admission, highly popular convict establishment at—at—Dartmouth? shall we say Dartmouth? be it so, we'll say Dartmouth! Our first idea, in order to impart a greater reality to the situation, was to place before you a regular train with locomotive, &c., &c., all complete; and for this purpose we applied to a certain railway company for the loan of one; but the secretary, in reply, said that the only materials he could offer us were cattle trucks and coal wagons, all the passenger rolling stock being in requisition, owing to the unusual number they had smashed up during the year.

He certainly offered us the use of an engine, but at the same time candidly gave us to understand that it was a little bit rusty, and wouldn't stand the slightest pressure; he further added that if the knob of the steam-whistle *should* happen to knock out the front teeth of any of the audience, we were not to blame *him* if we had a few compensation actions to sustain!—and so on! Altogether the alternative was so dismal that we decided on sacrificing a flaming line in our playbill about “Flashing express,” “Real steam,” “Genuine foot-warmers,” which we had composed for the occasion, and to fall back upon the best scene that our stage-carpenter and property-man could prepare for us.

We must, therefore, ask you to bring your imaginations to our aid, and to fancy you see in that door and in these four easy chairs the interior of a first-class compartment of a railway carriage, and to imagine further that I have passed the night in one of them, and am at the present moment still enjoying a profound sleep.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, permit me to enter into my part, to seat myself in the snuggest corner I can find, and to resume my interrupted nap! (*makes a profound bow to audience, goes up stage, and seats himself on the first chair, L. H., puts on his travelling cap, wraps himself up in the railway rug after having placed on the second chair, L., his travelling bag, a railway guide, and a paper knife; he then yawns once or twice, then falls asleep, and after a time snores gently. Loud noise of train arriving, with steam engine, railway bell, and whistle, as the train is supposed to arrive and gradually to stop.*)

GUARD (*heard without*). Reading! Change here for Guildford, Dorking, Reigate, Redhill!

VOICE (*without*). Guard, how long do we stop here?

GUARD (*without*). Ten minutes, sir! (*Cries of “Reading; change here,” &c., &c., &c., repeated, and gradually diminishing, accompanied by noise of slamming doors, &c.*)

GENTLEMAN (*starting from his sleep*). What's that? Who speaks of stopping? I wonder what the time is? (*looks at watch*). Seven o'clock? (*opens door and looks out*). Broad daylight, I declare (*closing door again*); then I must have slept the best part of the night! I don't even remember my travelling companion getting out; he seems to have forgotten his newspaper. (*taking up paper from chair*). Not a very talkative fellow—in fact, he never opened his mouth, except to put something into it—principally Abernethies and peppermint drops. By jove, his *Daily News* is full of crumbs and carraways now! a regular pantry!

GUARD (*again heard without*). Reading! ten minutes to stop!

GENTLEMAN. Ten minutes to stop? then I may as well get out and stretch my legs a bit (*rises, puts railway rug, guide, and*

travelling bag on his seat, and goes to door c.); then calls: Guard! whereabouts is the refreshment bar?

GUARD (*without*). This way, sir (*Gentleman goes out at door c. towards R. H.—short pause*).

The Lady looks in at c. and stops, then enters with two small parcels and a bonnet-box.

LADY. Yes; all things considered I decidedly prefer this carriage to the ladies' compartment, where there's only room for one, and then what should I do with my packages? Besides, ladies are not so remarkably agreeable among themselves; whilst here—(*looking about her*)—let me see, which corner shall I take? I think this will do (*indicating the seat which the Gentleman has just left*); one's face to the engine, and not so likely to be troubled by people getting in and out; yes, this will do very well indeed! (*during this she removes the Gentleman's effects from first chair L. H. to the opposite chair at R.*); and after all, provided one has a gentleman for a travelling companion, a host of these little difficulties soon disappear! (*seats herself on first chair L. H.*). There! I shall do very nicely here—very nicely indeed! (*here the Gentleman appears outside at door c.*). Some one's coming! one of the opposite sex! I hope a gentleman,—suppose I pretend to be asleep? I will! I'll shut my eyes, and then I shall be able to judge of his appearance! (*wraps herself up so as to conceal her face, and pretends to be asleep*).

GENTLEMAN (*entering at door and stamping his feet*). I feel all the better! thanks to a glass of sherry and half a dozen rapid turns up and down the platform, the circulation is re-established, so now for another dose of pins and needles. Halloa! what's this? my seat taken and all my things bundled away anyhow on another seat! Well, of all the cool proceedings—(*to the Lady*). I beg pardon, madam, but—asleep? Rather a sudden attack of drowsiness considering she can't have been here more than five minutes! However, she's a lady—at least she looks like one, though she is such a cool hand, and I can't be so ungallant as to turn her out, especially as she looks so snug and comfortable! I must take another corner! (*he seats himself on second chair at L. H., partly turning his back to the Lady*).

LADY (*aside and partly uncovering her face*). I knew these little difficulties would soon arrange themselves! (*wraps herself up as before*).

GENTLEMAN (*fidgiting about in his seat*). I was much more comfortable in my own seat. There was a nice hollow for one's back there; but here there's a confounded lump that's positively painful! I must confess I have found that women in general haven't the slightest hesitation in taking advantage of one if they possibly can; here's an instance; just as I had got used to my seat, in comes one of the weaker sex and turns me out bag and baggage! They know their power and abuse it; too bad! Now

(*looking aside at Lady*) if my neighbour were but young—and pretty into the bargain—but no; catch a woman wrapping herself up like that when she is young (*gaping*) and pretty! (*his head nods once or twice and he falls asleep*).

GUARD (*without*). Take your seats! Any more going on?

LADY (*cautiously peeping at Gentleman, then uncovering and aside*). So it seems I shall have no other travelling companion but this gentleman! (*here loud railway whistle heard, and noise of train starting*). We're off (*looking at Gentleman again*). I must say he appears to be perfectly harmless and inoffensive. (*Gentleman snores*). What did he say? (*a louder snore from Gentleman*). Well, if that's a specimen of his conversation, it isn't likely to compromise one! (*another snore*). I may as well go to sleep myself, and then perhaps I may be able to join in the conversation too! (*wraps herself up, but this time allows her face to remain uncovered; closes her eyes; pause*).

GENTLEMAN (*suddenly waking and shifting his position*). Decidedly, of all the uncomfortable seats this is the most uncomfortable. I should like to know what they stuff their cushions with, I feel as if I'd got a quartern loaf at my back! (*taking a rapid glance at Lady, then in a savage tone*). She seems comfortable enough! How absurd—how ridiculous of me not to have demanded—not to have in-sis-ted (*looking again at Lady*). By Jove, she is young! and by no means bad-looking! Bad-looking! she's pretty—very pretty—*excessively* pretty! and to think I should have actually gone to sleep in her presence! One never knows what one does in one's sleep, luckily, I never snore; that's one comfort! (*takes off his travelling cap, arranges his hair, cravat, &c.*). How soundly she sleeps—if she *does* sleep! (*in doubt*). When one is *really* asleep—I mean *fast* asleep—it isn't usual to wear a smile on one's face; on the contrary, one's face generally gets ugly! I'll be bound that just now I was positively hideous! (*he coughs loudly, the Lady moves*). She wakes! (*suddenly and loudly*). What a beautiful country! what a lovely green on those meadows! (*Lady keeps silence*). I'll try again! (*still louder*). How unusually beautiful are the autumn tints, especially so early in the spring! (*pause; aside*). No response? She must have taken a sleeping draught!

LADY (*pretending to wake*). A thousand pardons, sir; did you speak?

GENTLEMAN. I was merely observing what a lovely meadow on those greens! I mean—(*another pause*)—I hear the harvest is likely to be a plentiful one, although I'm told that turnips are backward, I haven't heard anything about carrots.

LADY (*in an indifferent tone*). I beg pardon; were you speaking to me? (*Aside*). Some gentleman farmer, evidently.

GENTLEMAN (*nettled and imitating her—aside*). "Were you speaking to me?" I rather think I *was* speaking to her!

Halloa! she's off to sleep again! No one can call *her* particularly wide awake—well, since she's off into land of dreams again I don't see why I shouldn't indulge in a cigarette (*takes out some cigarette papers, tobacco pouch, spreads them on his knees and proceeds to make a cigarette; then stops*). Stop, though! I can't smoke without first asking her permission; of course not! (*Aloud and coughing*). Ahem! (*watching her*). Sound as a top! Try again! (*coughing louder*). Ahem! (*the Lady opens her eyes and moves impatiently,—aside*). That did it!

GENTLEMAN (*apologetically*). My cough is rather troublesome, ma'am.

LADY. I find it so—very!

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). Well! that's about the rudest thing I've heard for some time! (*Aloud*). I was about to ask you whether you object to the smell of tobacco?

LADY. Oh, not at all, sir!

GENTLEMAN. Thank you! (*proceeds to make his cigarette and about to light it*).

LADY. I mean, not till it's lighted!

GENTLEMAN. Oh, I see; and then you do?

LADY. Very much indeed!

GENTLEMAN. Even when you are asleep? (*in an insinuating tone*).

LADY (*slowly and decisively*). Whether I am awake or asleep, sir!

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). Now that's what I call selfish—just as if the smoke could get up her nose when her eyes are shut! (*putting away his smoking apparatus. Aside*). I must say I have met more agreeable young ladies—*very much* more agreeable—in fact, I may say I never remember meeting one *less* agreeable—Well, I shan't disturb the “Sleeping Beauty” again in a hurry. Now for another nap! (*sulkily crams smoking apparatus into his pocket, draws his cap very much over his head, stands up, folds himself up in his rug, and then flounces down on his seat again, partially turning his back to the Lady*).

LADY (*slowly turning her head and taking a glance at Gentleman*). Well! I must confess he put away his smoking apparatus with a very good grace! (*sees newspaper*). Some one has left a newspaper! (*taking newspaper and reading*). Um, um! *Plymouth Gazette*. “Foreign News,” “Paris Fashions,” “Early Strawberries.” What's this? “Escape of a convict. We learn that Benjamin Burkshaw, a criminal of the most desperate character, effected his escape from Dartmoor prison yesterday. The following is his description: Age, not exactly known; eyes, nothing peculiar; wears a long black beard—has probably cut it off; walks slightly lame with one leg, uncertain which; supposed to have directed his steps towards London, or in some other direction.” Dear me! it is just possible he may be in this very train! (*looking aside at the Gentleman, then reading again*). “Middle

height" (*looking again at Gentleman*); "inclined to be stout" (*another look at Gentleman*); he's so rolled up in his rug one can't judge! (*reads again*), "slightly bald, with a scar on left side of forehead" (*here the Gentleman in his sleep hastily pulls his travelling cap over his forehead; the Lady gives a sudden start and recoils as far as possible from the Gentleman*). How very suddenly he pulled his cap over his forehead—and the left side of it too! Pshaw! how foolish, how absurd of me! (*reads paper again, and then closes her eyes once more*).

GENTLEMAN (*rousing himself*). It's no use! I can't get a wink of sleep, except by fits and starts—principally starts! (*Looking at Lady*). Still asleep! and no book to read except this "Illustrated Guide through England and Wales." However, *that's* better than "Bradshaw" (*during above he has taken a book out of his bag and cuts the leaves with a paper knife; turns over leaves*). What's this? (*reads*). "Guildford, county town of Surrey. It was in the neighbourhood of this ancient and picturesque town that the famous Dick Turpin——" (*here the Lady and Gentleman are suddenly thrown forward*).

LADY (*alarmed*). What a shock! Has anything happened?

GENTLEMAN (*indifferently*). Nothing of consequence! merely the train passing over something—or somebody!

LADY (*aside*). Rather an unfeeling remark! (*aloud*). Can you tell me where we are, sir? I am quite a stranger to this line.

GENTLEMAN. We *should* be near Guildford. You may not be aware, madam, that it was here that—(*taking a peep aside at his book*)—"that the famous Dick Turpin"—you've heard of Dick Turpin, of course—the celebrated highwayman? (*Lady shakes her head*). Well, it was here that he was in the habit of spending his leisure hours—I mean when he'd nothing better to do—in—in (*taking another peep at book*)—"in planting potatoes!"—Poor Dick! my grandfather saw him hanged!

LADY (*shocked*). Hanged?

GENTLEMAN. Yes—I forget exactly what for—something about putting an old lady on the kitchen fire!

LADY (*indignantly*). Surely, never was a fate more richly deserved!

GENTLEMAN. On the contrary; she was quite a respectable sort of old body!

LADY (*aloud and in a satirical tone*). Thanks, sir, for your kind and *interesting* information!

GENTLEMAN (*modestly*). Don't mention it, I beg!

LADY (*aside*). A newspaper correspondent, perhaps! I prefer that to a farmer!

GENTLEMAN (*after a short pause*). I find the sun rather too warm on this side of the carriage, madam—will it inconvenience you if I take this seat? (*indicating first chair at R.*).

LADY. Not in the least! Indeed, I should have the less right

to object, as I am afraid I have appropriated *yours*; and by far the more comfortable one, I suspect!

GENTLEMAN. You simply foresaw that I should offer it to you, madam!

LADY. Oh, sir! (*bowing*).

GENTLEMAN. Oh, madam! (*bowing; he removes things from where the Lady had placed them, and seats himself opposite to her*).

LADY (*aside*). Really a very pleasant, agreeable fellow!

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). Her full face is even better than her profile! (*aloud and in a sentimental tone*). Ah, madam, would it were in my power to prolong this pleasant journey—this delightful *tête-à-tête*!

LADY (*with dignity*). Sir!

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). That's no go! (*aloud*). I mean, madam, that one seems to travel *too fast* nowadays! (*Lady expresses surprise*). In fact, we're *all* too fast!

LADY (*severely*). Sir!

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). That's no go! (*aloud*). We've only to contrast the present with the time when the wife of one of our ancient kings traversed the whole of England by easy stages of five miles a day!

LADY. Of whom do you speak?

GENTLEMAN. Of—of—(*aside*) hang me if I know—(*aloud*) of Tabitha—I mean Elgitha, the wife of—Edmund—Sobersides—I should say Ironsides! But without going quite so far back, madam, I confess I often regret the days of those heavy old stage coaches called “High-flyers,” “Eclipses,” and “Rockets.”

LADY (*smiling*). Because they went so slowly?

GENTLEMAN. Precisely. Still, it had its advantages—it gave one an opportunity to make the acquaintance of one's travelling companions—to establish a friendly feeling—perhaps one of a more *tender* nature! (*with a tender look at the Lady*).

LADY (*with a stare of astonishment*). Sir!

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). It's no use. I won't try any more! (*aloud and in a more colloquial tone*). Besides, in a stage coach there was always the chance of one of those little adventures that so often happened on the road!

LADY. You mean attacks by highwaymen, such as your friend Mr.—Turpin—who had a weakness for putting respectable old ladies on the kitchen fire? (*smiling satirically—then, changing her tone*) I remember myself a certain event which happened some five or six years ago when we were travelling.

GENTLEMAN. We? you and your pa and ma, probably?

LADY. My husband and I!

GENTLEMAN. Husband? you are married, ma'am! actually, positively married?

LADY. Alas, sir! (*sighing*).

GENTLEMAN (*aside*). I see! an unhappy union!—an ill-assorted match—poor soul! (*aloud*). Ah, madam, you are not the only one of your too confiding sex who have found marriage a bed of roses—I mean, of nettles, instead of one of nettles—I mean roses!

LADY. But, sir—you mistake—alas, sir, I am a widow!

GENTLEMAN. A widow? I'm delighted to hear it! No, I'm not! of course not! I deeply sympathize with you—as I always do with widows—I know what it is myself. But you mustn't give way—you'll get used to it in time—like the eels—no, not like the eels—but you were about to mention some adventure which happened to you while travelling with—the late lamented—

(*Noise heard of train gradually stopping—engine, railway bell, whistle, &c., &c.*)

VOICE (*outside, gradually approaching*). "Guildford! Guildford! change for Weybridge, Chertsey, Virginia Water; all tickets ready."

GENTLEMAN (*angrily*). All tickets ready! these railway companies are perfectly absurd with their mania for examining tickets! (*feeling in his pocket*).

LADY (*smiling*). Another advantage of the good old coaching days!

GENTLEMAN. Yes, quite so! (*feeling again in his pockets one after the other*). Ah! here it is—no, it isn't—how very odd; now I've got it—no, I haven't! (*diving in his pockets again*).

LADY. I'm afraid you've lost your ticket, sir.

GENTLEMAN. Oh no! I haven't lost it—only I can't find it!

LADY. You may have dropped it? (*looking about on floor*).

GENTLEMAN. Pray don't trouble yourself; I shall be sure to find it (*aside*) as soon as I've paid for another! (*Aloud*). I'll just speak to the station-master. Excuse me a moment? (*LADY bows, Gentleman exit at c., and disappears towards L.H.*)

LADY. Poor fellow! no wonder he dislikes railways if he's in the habit of losing his ticket every time he travels!

GUARD appears at door c.

GUARD (*to LADY*). Ticket, please, ma'am? (*takes ticket and returns it to Lady*). Thank you, ma'am. (*Seeing the Gentleman's bag &c. &c. on seat*.) These things belong to you, ma'am?

LADY. Oh no!

GUARD. Has any one left this carriage?

LADY. Yes! a gentleman—not a minute ago.

GUARD (*sulkily*). How can I examine people's tickets when they get out at every station?

LADY. He fancies he has lost his ticket.

GUARD (*suspiciously*). Lost his ticket?—what a pity! (*Aside*).

That's an old dodge! (*Aloud*). Is the gentleman one of your party, ma'am?

LADY. Oh dear no! only so far as we are journeying in the same compartment.

GUARD (*examining the Gentleman's bag*). No name on his travelling bag—that's queer! We're expected to keep both eyes open on this line, ma'am—only yesterday we nabbed a desperate bank forger at this very station; and that *oudacious* chap Burshaw is still at large!

LADY (*aside*). Not a very cheerful subject of conversation—I'm really getting quite nervous! (*collecting her packages and rising*).

GUARD. Going to get out, ma'am?

LADY. Yes, I should prefer the ladies' compartment.

GUARD. No room there, ma'am, eight of 'em already, besides babies!

LADY. I may get into another carriage, I presume?

GUARD. Certainly, ma'am. Good-day, ma'am (*goes out at door*).

LADY. Stop! stop! Help me out! Guard! guard! (*calling*).

GUARD (*outside*). Can't stop now, ma'am. Train just going on.

LADY. This is really too bad! Can't even change carriages on this line, which seems to be especially patronized by the criminal classes! But pshaw! I'm alarming myself unnecessarily—is it likely that this gentleman—and he *is* a gentleman—who seems to be on intimate terms with the wife of Edmund Ironsides—can possibly have any connection with—how absurd of me! I really ought to be ashamed of myself (*seeing the paper-knife which the gentleman has left on seat*). What a strange-looking paper-knife—quite a formidable weapon! Is it a paper-knife? it looks more like a stiletto! (*taking up paper-knife very carefully between her finger and thumb, and then quickly dropping it again*). Such an instrument as that was never made to cut leaves! It looks much adapted to— (*shuddering*). How ridiculous of me! My silly fears are running away with me again. Ha, ha, ha! (*forcing a laugh*).

GUARD (*without*). Take your seats!

GENTLEMAN *hurries in at C. The Lady suddenly stops laughing and gets as far as she can into her corner.*

GENTLEMAN. I've found my ticket! I knew I should the moment I bought another (*takes his seat—to the Lady*). Where do you suppose it was?—you'll never guess. In my purse, where I always put my tickets! Ha, ha, ha!

LADY (*aside*). He *had* a ticket, then?

GENTLEMAN. It is very kind of you to interest yourself in the misfortunes of a stranger (*bowing*).

LADY. Is it not natural?

GENTLEMAN. It seems to be so to *you*, madam (*bowing again and moving a little towards Lady—who retreats*).

LADY (*aside*). If I could only induce him to remove his travelling cap—not that I should discover the slightest scar on his forehead—I should then be completely reassured. (*Suddenly*). Pardon me—is not that a friend of yours bowing to you on the other platform? (*indicating the audience*).

GENTLEMAN. Bowing to me? where? (*putting his hand to his cap*).

LADY (*pointing*). There! (*Aside*). Now for it!

GENTLEMAN (*lowering his hand again without removing his cap*). No, ma'am, I don't know him—besides, he's not bowing to me.

LADY (*aside*). That's a failure!

GENTLEMAN. Halloa! Somebody's been moving my things!

LADY. Yes, the guard!—he seemed curious—I might say *anxious*—to ascertain if your name was on your travelling bag!

GENTLEMAN. Very inquisitive of him! Why should I make my name public property?—there may be reasons why I should *not*!—pressing reasons! You can understand that, madam?

LADY. Y—es! I'm afraid I can—I mean, of course I can!

GENTLEMAN. But, as I was saying, the interest you have so kindly taken in me—a perfect stranger——

LADY (*very quickly*). Not at all, sir; on the contrary! No—that is——

GENTLEMAN. Permit me to continue. That interest, I repeat, comes naturally to *you*, blessed, as I'm sure you are, with so sweet, so gentle, so affectionate a disposition.

LADY (*very quickly*). Quite the reverse, I assure you, sir—I've a dreadful temper!

GENTLEMAN. Again: that charming hand is not less characteristic—it requires but one glance at those delicately-tapered fingers—— (*about to take her hand; Lady hastily withdraws it*).

LADY (*aside*). I do believe the man's going to make love to me!

GENTLEMAN. But stay—I see one line here that is singularly prominent—permit me (*taking Lady's hand*).

LADY (*aside*). I'm quite at his mercy! Not the slightest use my screaming!

GENTLEMAN (*looking at her hand*). Yes, a very sudden intersection, threatening, I fear, some personal danger.

LADY (*alarmed*). Yes—very likely! (*aside*). How intently he fixes his eyes on my diamond ring!

GENTLEMAN. But were you not saying that you had once been exposed to some peril in travelling?

LADY. Yes; but I was not *alone* then.

GENTLEMAN. The "late lamented," I presume?

LADY. Yes; we were attacked by robbers in crossing the

Pyrenees! (*very quickly*). Not that I particularly object to robbers! In fact, I rather like them! (*aside*). I may as well try what a little flattery will do.

GENTLEMAN (*still holding her hand*). You have a remarkably fine diamond here, madam!

LADY. Yes, a very good *imitation*, isn't it?

GENTLEMAN. Excuse me. I cannot mistake a diamond—no, no; I've had too many pass through my hands to do that!

LADY (*aside*). I'm afraid he has!

GENTLEMAN. And yet there's a flaw in it—if you'll allow me, I'll point it out to you (*looking about—then suddenly taking up the paper knife—the Lady screams*). I'm afraid I alarmed you!

LADY (*trying to be calm*). Oh dear no! and if you've quite done examining my hand——

GENTLEMAN. Quite, madam! (*releasing her hand*).

LADY. And you detect no further threatening of—personal danger?

GENTLEMAN. None whatever!

LADY. Then you are a believer in spiritualism, and phrenology, and all that sort of thing?

GENTLEMAN. Certainly I am! May I ask, madam, if you have ever examined the head of a criminal?

LADY (*shocked*). Never, sir!

GENTLEMAN. Perhaps you have never even been brought into personal contact with one?

LADY. Certainly not, sir; though I'm sure I should feel the greatest pity for him—I should indeed! (*in a commiserating tone*).

GENTLEMAN. Understand me; I don't allude to the *milder* class of criminals, such as thieves, robbers, forgers, burglars, and such like; but one of those desperate fellows who—who—in fact, who *stick at nothing*! By-the-by, I have a collection here of photographs of some of our most notorious criminals, which I think would interest you.

LADY (*shuddering*). Yes—intensely!

GENTLEMAN (*opening his travelling bag*). Ah! (*producing a revolver*) there's rather a curious story connected with this revolver!

LADY (*alarmed, and trying to look unconcerned*). Indeed?

GENTLEMAN. I never travel without one—every chamber loaded and ready for use, so that I have six lives at my disposal—a very comfortable feeling to have! Don't you think so?

LADY. Yes, very much so indeed!

GENTLEMAN. Here are the photographs (*producing packet*); here is one of them (*about to show a portrait*). No, I make a mistake; this is one of myself.

LADY (*aghast*). Yours?

GENTLEMAN (*smiling*). Yes! this is the one! (*presenting a second portrait*). You'll observe a remarkable protuberance of this part of the skull (*pointing to it*); that's the organ of destructiveness—I have it myself, only not *quite* so strongly developed! (*touching his head*)—don't you perceive it?

LADY. Yes—I—see! But I confess I cannot understand how you happen to be in possession of these *remarkably interesting*—works of art?

GENTLEMAN (*smiling*). A very simple matter—my occupation necessitates my associating with this particular class of “Her Majesty's subjects”—as I happen to be——

LADY (*quickly*). Hush! I know! You need not tell me!

GENTLEMAN (*anxiously*). What is the matter? You are positively trembling—with cold, no doubt! Allow me to wrap this rug round you.

LADY. No, no!

GENTLEMAN. Nay, I insist! (*placing his rug round Lady's feet*).

LADY. But you will feel the want of it yourself, especially as it seems you have passed the night in the train!

GENTLEMAN. Exactly! Six hours ago I was in Dartmoor Prison!

LADY. Dartmoor! (*aside*). He confesses it!

GENTLEMAN (*smiling*). Not a very attractive residence—I would gladly have left it before, but, unfortunately, I was detained!

LADY. Detained!

GENTLEMAN (*smiling*). I may say *chained* to it—by my confounded profession!

LADY (*aside*). He calls it a *profession*!

GENTLEMAN. There's no saying how long the Home Secretary might have kept me there; but I couldn't stand it any longer, so I managed to make my escape, and now I'm free once more!

LADY (*suddenly starting up with a scream*). Stop, sir! Don't say any more! Have pity on me, for mercy's sake! (*falling on her knees and clasping her hands*).

GENTLEMAN (*astounded*). My dear madam——

LADY (*hysterically*). I know who you are—I know all about the scar on your forehead!—but I won't betray you—I won't, indeed! Here, take my purse!—take my watch! (*thrusting the articles into the Gentleman's hands*)—all I have, good Mr. Burkshaw!—but spare my life!

GENTLEMAN. Your life? Mr. Burkshaw? What—what do you mean?

LADY. Mercy! mercy!

GENTLEMAN (*seriously*). My dear madam! Pray compose yourself! You have evidently fallen into some strange error—in a word, I happen to be——

LADY. Yes, yes! I know who you happen to be! Take my advice and jump out of the train!

GENTLEMAN (*astonished*). Jump out of the train? Madam, your strange conduct compels me to be serious! In a word, I have the honour to be a Government Inspector of Prisons!

LADY. Eh? What? You—an Inspector of Prisons?

GENTLEMAN. Yes, madam (*taking off his cap and bowing to Lady*).

LADY (*eagerly looking at Gentleman's forehead*). And—you haven't got a scar on your forehead? Oh, sir! if you only knew how delighted I am that you haven't got a scar on your forehead!

GENTLEMAN (*bewildered*). A scar on my forehead? (*feeling his forehead*). But may I ask what has suggested to you all these notions about thieves and robbers?

LADY. Why, you've been talking about nothing else for the last quarter of an hour!

GENTLEMAN (*smiling*). I beg your pardon. You certainly first began the conversation about these—*gentlemen*.

LADY. Because you said that you associated with them.

GENTLEMAN. Naturally, as an inspector of prisons.

LADY. Then those portraits—in your possession?

GENTLEMAN. Were taken merely to forward the ends of justice!

LADY (*with a sigh of relief*). I understand it all. I can laugh at my folly now, which entirely arose from this silly newspaper paragraph—the sole cause of all my absurd terror.

GENTLEMAN. What newspaper paragraph?

LADY. Read this, sir (*giving him newspaper*).

GENTLEMAN (*looking at paper, and then giving way to a loud laugh*). Ha, ha, ha! Why, my dear madam, this is quite an old story! Our interesting friend, Mr. Burckshaw, happened to be shot in attempting his escape from Dartmoor more than twelve months ago! (*looking at date of newspaper*). Of course, this paper is a year old—December, 1884!

LADY. So it is! Oh, sir! what must you think of me?

GENTLEMAN (*in a tender tone*). May I tell you? That you are the most charming travelling companion——

(*Here noise of train stopping, engine, railway whistle, &c., &c., heard.*)

VOICE (*outside*). Victoria! All tickets ready!

(*Lady and Gentleman both rise.*)

GENTLEMAN (*gallantly*). I am staying some time in London, madam. Will you permit me to call upon you, if only to remove from your mind any lingering doubt as to my perfect identity?

LADY. With pleasure, sir! (*suddenly, and in a very gracious tone*). Oh, sir! how very good of you to be a Government In-

spector of Prisons! (*holding out her hand to Gentleman, who takes it and raises it to his lips*).

VOICE (*again heard*). All tickets ready!

The Gentleman and Lady gather their packages and bow to each other as the

CURTAIN FALLS.

For permission to act this piece apply to the Author by letter, to the care of MESSRS. KELLY & Co., 51, Great Queen Street, W.C.

GORDON, 1885.

HE lived a life a lesson for all time,
In golden letters writ for man's behoof,
A help to all who stand, or feign would upward climb,
Temptation proof!

Thro' weary months of watching all alone,
Thro' daily patience and thro' daily toil,
Dauntless against a host; and he but one,
Unconquerably loyal!

Eternal God! Fount of eternal power,
Whence streams perennial flow of living strength for man,
No might but thine could help him in that fatal hour
When treachery began!

That when at last death came to him,
Which he so oft had faced with fearless smile,
The rest of heaven was his; and all grown dim
Th' immeasurable trial!

Alas for England, that her noblest son
At such an hour, had no one by his side!
What crooked counsels worked, that England mourns alone,
And Gordon died?

Farewell, thou fearless heart, at last set free
From all the trammels of this mortal frame,
Altho' thou sought'st it not—Time brings to thee
Imperishable fame!

Yet if in realms beyond our ken, thou 'st passed
To other worlds perchance still reached by earthly bonds,
The wail of England hear; and thence—thy mantle cast
Upon her sons!

GLIMPSES OF OUT-OF-WORK LONDON.

AS SEEN BY BIBLE-WOMEN AND NURSES.

ALTHOUGH this paper appears in April, it took form in the writer's mind during the last fortnight of February, when the cry of the Unemployed was resounding throughout the kingdom, and when the daily press was reserving space for the Mansion House Fund and the details of its distribution.

Let us hope that things will be looking up a bit before these words are in print.

"The Unemployed"—to use the current phrase—form collectively a subject far too large and involving too many grave and intricate questions for me even to attempt to discuss, here or elsewhere. I therefore propose merely to put before you a few phases of the present distress that have either come under my own personal observation, or have been reported to me by those who are constantly in and out of working-class homes.

The sad facts we have to lay before you shall be presented in as simple and undressed-up way as possible. They will only be interesting by reason of their terrible truthfulness.

And first:—Where is Out-of-Work London? "Oh, why, in the East-End, of course!"

True, certainly, as far as it goes, but a long way from the whole truth. One of the most heart-rending appeals our Mission has received this winter came from an outlying, almost suburban district in the far west, and represented, not one or two cases, but a large and respectable out-of-work population.

One man in this same neighbourhood, after some months of want of employment and more than semi-starvation, at last found work. A day or two afterwards his wife thought his manner very strange; he took to breaking up his bloater into little bits and putting it in his tea, and very soon went quite out of his mind. He is now in an asylum. Alas! he is only one among too many we know, who, after long suffering, have broken down when the coveted work has come at last, but too late. No, Out-of-Work London is not the East End only. It extends through every one of the postal districts, not excepting even the E.C. Not excepting the E.C. did I say? If you heard the stories that reach us from the densely-crowded "Cabinet-Makers' Land" that lies between Shoreditch and Finsbury, you would imagine that poverty could reach no deeper depths than among the dwellers of that

district just without the boundaries of the City of London itself. We have several devoted women at work there. One nurse said to us the other day, "I feel ashamed to look my people in the face; they're in such distress, and it's so little I can do for them."

We help her from the Mother House as much as we can; but our work is all over London, and we are not a Relief Society, although we have a Sickness and Help Fund, which brings comfort to many a sick and starving family.

"Well, nurse, what do you do for them?"

"Why, ma'am, when I get a little money from the Mission, I buy a cow's heel and some vegetables and make a good strong soup, and take it to those who are the worst off. How they manage to live I'm sure I don't know. It's been a heart-breaking winter—and so long!"

I ought perhaps to say here that the nurses are allowed cereal food and beef-tea for their invalids; but how can one feed whole families? Yet how terrible it is to see the hungry children or the husband looking on while the sick mother or child has a meal! No wonder Bible-women and nurses come up to the Mother House and beg for help with tears in their eyes! Never are they refused while it is possible to help them. And very thankful has the Mission been this winter that, largely through the kindness of working men in work, they have been able to give much more help than usual.

Perhaps before I go any farther I had better tell you a little about our Mission. Its name, unfortunately, is a great deal too long—"The London Bible and Domestic Female Mission." "Bible-women and Nurses" is shorter, and perhaps more to the point.

Somewhere about thirty years ago, Mrs. Ranyard, better known as L. N. R., took her first walk, one sultry July day, through the now demolished rookeries of St. Giles's. Unused to the London slums, she was perfectly staggered and horror-stricken by what she saw and heard—by the crowds, the poverty, the vice, the dirt.

Nearly every one else would have repeated the questions that have been asked in pity and dismay so many thousands of times, "How do they all live? How are they all fed?" But to Mrs. Ranyard's mind a still more pressing inquiry arose. "How," she asked—it was so entirely characteristic of her—so quite her own way of looking at things—"how are these crowds of people in their endless courts and alleys supplied with the Bible? How do they get the Bread of Life? What do they know of the Message from God?"

Out of the answer arose the Bible-woman. From the Bible-woman's visit sprang the mothers' meeting, the domestic mission, the clothing club, the nurse, and the lady to superintend all.

This Mission now works throughout London. Bible-women and nurses are chosen from among the working people, and just as in the higher classes the clergyman or pastor becomes the

centre of a social circle, so does the Bible-woman or nurse in her humbler sphere. Taken as a whole, I should think that no society in London is more intimately acquainted with the homes of the poor than is our Mission; which works from the far east, London beyond the Lea, Canning Town and Barking Road, to long past the distant south-west Wandsworth, the London on the Wandle; from the Holloway under the northern heights to desperately out-of-work Deptford and Greenwich miles below Bridge.

Ask any of the women engaged on this vast field whether there is more than the usual amount of distress in their districts this winter, and they will simply open their eyes wide with astonishment at the question.

"Why, nearly everybody's out of work!" they will exclaim. "And it isn't as if they had had anything like a summer to make up for last winter. They've been out of work so long; that's where it is."

"But yet," you say, "the returns do not show much increase in pauperism. How is this?" To which the answer, gathered from great part of London is:

"Because this unusual distress presses the most severely on the upper-class artisan, who would submit to almost any privation rather than apply for parish relief. Chronic penury is always with us, but the bitter destitution of this winter is crushing the very life out of many a family, who have, until the last few months, been used to many a home comfort; men who for years have held one situation, now are either discharged or are only doing an occasional day's work."

I am, myself, constantly visiting with our Bible-women and nurses in different parts of London. I have seen many an out-of-work family lately, and witnessed the dull despair that settles down upon the parents, especially upon the father.

One man's face haunts me now, as I write, although it is some weeks since I saw him and I have paid very many visits since. He was sitting by a small fire in a neat and clean little room in a south London court. A pale-faced little child was by his knee, another wee thing was clinging to its mother, who, poor woman, was dreading the arrival of that inevitable other one, who always comes at the most inconvenient times, and saw nothing but the workhouse before her.

The husband had been years in one good situation; he had been out of work for months. Some little time before, unable to stand the sight of his wife and children and almost mad with distress and want of food, he had stayed away from his home for days; now he was sitting by the fire the picture of despair; the dreary, lifeless look in his pallid downcast face and averted eyes was a far stronger appeal to my sympathy than any words could have been.

They were just going to have a meal of bread and a weak beverage they called tea, to buy which they had sold one of their few remaining dishes for twopence. The elder children had been to a free dinner, but there had been no breakfast for them nor for any one else of that household.

"They said, how could we be so cruel as to send them to school without a bit of bread?" the mother told me sadly, adding, "But how could we help it? As if we shouldn't have given it to them, poor little dears, if we'd only got it!"

We left them a trifle to go on with. The new baby arrived a few hours after we had left; but the mother did not have to go to the dreaded workhouse as we had a nurse on the district who was able to look after her, supply her with ready-cooked food, and help in many other ways.

People of this kind, really good, struggling working folks, are most wonderfully grateful for anything that is done for them. The smallest kindness seems to take them by surprise, and to be altogether delightful to them, whereas for the Hereditary Grand Pauper and his brood you never can do enough.

This worthy woman did not know how to express her thanks to our Mission; she could only say with the most touching gratitude, "All my wants have been met!"

This inevitable new baby is indeed a terrible addition to the troubles of an out-of-work family. Poor little being! his clothes are too often in pawn before he has ever had them on, or only his mother knows what she has had to go without to keep them for him.

He and his mother occupy a large proportion of the reports we receive every week. We have to keep a cupboard full of little things ready for him at our Mission House, No. 2, Adelphi Terrace. This is a specimen or two of how he is mentioned in our reports, only you must multiply him by hundreds.

"We went with nurse to Mrs. Denham. This poor woman looked as if she were far gone in consumption; she was also suffering from muscular rheumatism. Nurse washed the new baby, but there was nothing but rags to dress him in. The husband had been out of work a long while, and everything that could be taken to the pawn-shop had been taken there—even the baby's things were gone to get the necessaries of life. The room looked painfully bare; there were three other children. The mother is so thankful for the Mission's gift."

Here is another similar case:

"The poor mother was so thankful for the set of baby-things sent her from the Mission. There were three other children, and the husband had been out of work for eight months. They seem very, very poor. We heard a most sad tale of poverty, and the appearance of the mother, room, and bed showed it was but too true. The mother seems a nice sort of woman, and comes from

the country. With delight she told us that last week her husband had earned ten shillings after eight months of want of work.

"When he placed the money in my hand," said the poor woman, "I couldn't believe it, and I had to look again and again to see that it really was ten shillings. I couldn't believe that I had ten shillings again!"

These are the scenes that have been witnessed very often this winter, but not only in courts and alleys and on the top storeys of great industrial "models," but behind the neat white curtains or green Venetians in really pretty, well-built little houses in the long rows that now stand acre after acre, where only a few years since rhubarb and celery flourished, and which you may see from the carriages of nearly every railway that leaves London.

"If it wasn't for my old woman we should all be starved," said an out-of-work labourer in court the other day at the Socialist trial. A great many men can say the same just now; and where it is not the women of the family who are engaged in the final struggle with the all but victorious wolf, then it is the boy. Boys, on the whole, have been doing fairly this winter. Alas! in many cases they are taking the place of men permanently. They can manage some machines just as well, and work for much lower wages. So the man with a family to keep is turned off; the boy thinks his money enough to marry on, and things go from bad to worse.

As for women's work, it is a mockery to speak of its being "paid for" at all; but the astonishing cheerfulness with which they will toil for an average twopence an hour, the interest they will take in describing the details of the most monotonous task to any one who will listen with sympathy, is indeed wonderful, and may well put many a comparatively well-paid grumbler to shame.

Visiting in Shadwell the other day I found a good, honest woman, with a delicate out-of-work husband, and quite a small tribe of children, stitching away at the lining of huge great coats for the Servian Government. Sixpence she gets for the "finishing," and even her quick fingers must take three hours to get one done; yet she could smile and even joke.

"Why, bless me," she said, "these foreigners must be rare fine men, for some of these coats measure more than four yards round the waist."

To me it is truly wonderful that under such circumstances these women can smile, but they can and do, only sometimes one fancies their smiles are near akin to tears.

In the same neighbourhood I met a neat little girl who was taking home a great bundle of work unlike any I had seen before. She told me the bundle was full of little muslin shrimp bags; sixpence would be the price paid for the whole.

But there too often comes a time when even these poor earnings have to cease. The wife and mother has been keeping the home

a little together at the expense of her own health, perhaps even of her life. Such a one a nurse found recently very ill in bed and swollen with dropsy, brought on by cold upon cold, which had been neglected while she was overworking herself. The little home still looked tidy, but alas for the price paid for it!

The agony that decent, hard-working men and women will go through before yielding to the illness that will compel them to join the ranks of the out-of-work is indeed awful. Not long since I called on a man in the Drury Lane district who was laid up at home and still suffering severely.

"Many a time," he said, "before I knocked off, I've stood at my bench biting my lips till the blood came."

I had written thus far yesterday when I was obliged to break off.

This morning I went up to our Centre, or, as we prefer to call it, the Mother House. I have just returned with several fresh items, some of which I will proceed to write down.

To begin with I will take you to a little old-fashioned four-roomed house in the ancient city of Westminster; not quite under the Abbey's shadow, but not much beyond it. Here live an elderly jobbing tailor and his elderly wife. The "jobbing" is on a very humble scale, sixpence being as a rule the limit of pay. But ever since Christmas the sixpences, or even fourpences, have not been coming in, and so the poor old people are now very badly off.

One day last week the old husband set out to look for work, and the old wife set out to see what she could find for dinner at next to nothing. Going along she met a working man of her acquaintance, whom she told of her distress.

Now it so happened that this good man was in work. Said he:

"Our guv'nor and us chaps we make a collection every week, and we send it up to the Bible Ladies at Adelphi Terrace, and they give it away. Very kind ladies they are too, and they don't keep people waiting neither. Shouldn't wonder but if you was to write up to them they'd give you some of our money."

The old wife took the address, went home, and told her husband as soon as he returned.

"Don't," he said. "We'll struggle on a week longer."

But the wife was disobedient and wrote. The letter arrived on Saturday night, and on Monday one of our most valued workers at the Mother House was sent off to Westminster with some money and coal-tickets, and found everything just as the letter had represented.

The poor old wife was quite overjoyed at the success of her application.

"But," she said, "the people downstairs are much worse off than we are, for they have eight children, and I don't believe any

of them have had any food to-day. The father's gone out looking for work with scarcely a bit of shoe to his foot, and the children will be coming in from school presently, and I'm afraid there'll be nothing for them."

Now here I must absolutely permit myself a digression, while with the greatest caution I lift one little corner of the veil of secrecy with which our visitor must be shrouded. My fingers, as well as my mind, positively long to be painting her portrait! If the British public could once but catch a glimpse of her kind, cannie Scotch face when she is out on an errand of mercy there might be a run on all the banks, so eager would every one who could or could not spare a shilling for the Unemployed be to get her to lay it out!

"Well then, we'll just have the poor thing up," she said, when she had heard of the people downstairs. So they had her up; the surmise of her upstairs friend was but too true; the whole family had not broken their fast, and there was nothing for the children.

"Then ye'll just step over to the butcher's at once and get some pieces, and then ye'll get some potatoes and make a stew for them," said the visitor, when she had heard the mother's story.

The poor woman was a very decent body, but quite at her wits' ends. She thawed, however, very quickly at the sight of the coin and the kindly face, and the sound of the pleasant northern voice.

"And when will your husband be in, and what have you got for him?" continued the visitor.

The questions banished the gleam of brightness the vision of stew for the children had brought to the poor woman's face.

She answered the last one first.

"There's nothing but a bit of dry bread for him," she said; "and he won't be home before seven, or perhaps eight."

"Aye! But that'll be late for a man to be out when he's not at work," said the visitor.

"Yes, it's late," returned the wife dismally; then with an effort she went on, "To tell you the truth, he's been coming home every night cold and hungry; and when he's come home I've been cold and hungry too, and so have the children, and—" (miserably)—"*I've jawed him!* Now he don't come in till he's forced to it."

"Then ye'll just go and get some tea and sugar and a bit of meat that you can cook when he comes in to-night, poor man; and that'll be better than ja'ing him, won't it? And I'll be looking in again in a few days just to see how you're getting along."

I feel perfectly certain that the woman did as the visitor told her, because it would not be in human nature to refuse obedience.

I must tell you that I am the mere literary woman of the Mission; but I am sometimes allowed the privilege of going over

districts. I am a born Londoner, and no part of the great city is without deep interest for me. London has been a study and a hobby with me nearly all my life, and there are several ways in which I can help forward this quiet, somewhat old-fashioned Bible-loving and human-being-loving Mission. Sometimes I go for a long walk, or prowls by myself in an out-of-the-way neighbourhood and look about me, before I place myself in the hands of those who know the district well.

I took one of these long walks about a fortnight since, and the walk was impressed upon me by the severe cold I managed to catch; for a nipping day it was, and if ever a "nor'-easter" blew up the Thames and along Wapping Wall and round the peninsula men now call Rotherhithe, it blew that day.

"Have you much distress in your neighbourhood?" I recently asked of a gentleman who carries on a large business at Wapping Wall. I put the question, although I knew what the answer would be; but I was hardly prepared for the sudden change in his expression and the earnestness with which he replied, hurriedly, and as if I had touched an over-sensitive nerve:

"Distress! Aye, distress indeed! You should see them at the dock gates fighting like wild beasts when there's a call! You should hear them yell when they know how few of them are wanted!"

Fighting and yelling like wild beasts!

And for what?

Twopence per hour!

On the bitter morning I refer to I walked along Wapping Wall, between two towering rows of gigantic warehouses joined here and there by flying bridges. Little enough was doing; cheerless looked the long black basements, open both to Thames and street, framing in the cold grey river. Groups of men, wretchedly clad, stood leaning against every wall, or stamped up and down trying in vain to get some little warmth into their numbed limbs.

Many a pile of fine and comparatively new buildings was to let; many another closed, barred, and bolted.

The cause is not hard to find.

The commerce and the ships of London have outgrown London's Pool.

I called on several people with the Bible-woman, but everywhere we found extreme poverty, and yet so bravely concealed that only those who knew the decent homes well quite knew how sharp was the pinch endured. Wonderfully patient and uncomplaining are hundreds of such men and women as we constantly meet with. To let their poverty be known is to them almost worse than want itself. One poor woman who was in great straits—for living in a Peabody block the rent had to be found as regularly as Monday morning came—said only a day or two ago

to one of our workers who had helped her a little, "We never let any one know about our troubles. I have a good husband and we talk to each other, for we have no friend in London." Experienced Bible-women and nurses and others who are constantly visiting such homes, know, however, a good deal without being told. They do not expect to find among decent folks those striking pictures of want that appeal so strongly to the amateur "slummer," or the draughtsmen of sensational wood-cuts.

Shadwell Street Market, through which I passed, offered a very sharp contrast to the respectable homes we had just visited. It was about noon, the streets were literally crowded with a dense population whose general squalor you might perhaps equal in other parts of London, but which it would be hard indeed to surpass. Here are to be seen numberless women with thin black shawls in the last stage of shabbiness over their unkempt heads, the girls with heavy fringes that actually come down to their eyelids, the loafing men and boys, the barefooted ragged children that make up the crowd of a market street. A sad and disreputable sight it is even taken as a whole, but there are little bits of it perfectly loathsome in their vileness. For instance, a corner gin-shop, which local custom has given up almost entirely to women—if you can so call the beings that crawl in and out of it or stand about its bar, and a bit of low brazen-face sweet-hearting so absolutely Hogarthian in its repulsiveness that it was like a sudden flash from the eighteenth century, a corner of one of Hogarth's pictures come to life.

These are indeed "the dregs." Little can be done for them; but there are above them thousands who are fighting with all their might against the all but overwhelming odds that are beating them down into the vile ranks beneath them. These are the people we wish to help. Poor things, how they clutch at a straw!

Passing through the Thames Tunnel in an East London train, a few minutes landed me at Rotherhithe on the south bank of the Thames.

Rotherhithe is the peninsula formed by the first bend of the Thames below Bridge. Like the Isle of Dogs on the other side, this peninsula is so cut up by docks and timber ponds that it now consists far more of water than of land, but, as Mr. Besant has shown in his "Captain's Room," one can find a great many interesting persons and things within this riparian parish.

A street which is not unlike a much-extended and gently-curving Wapping Wall follows the river line. It is called Rotherhithe Street, and the first time you go along it you constantly fancy it is coming to an end as constantly to find it is not. This is owing to its way of being always just round the corner.

Enormous granaries flank both sides of the street for a considerable distance. When trade is brisk the roadway is scarcely passable, so close do the heavily-laden waggons follow each other.

There was, however, plenty of room, and a great deal too much to spare on the morning of my visit.

Later I called on an elderly man who had worked in one of those granaries for many years. He made half a day's work last week.

"I never see anything like it all the time I've worked by the waterside," he told me. "Me and some of my mates we were standing on Cherry Garden Pier this morning, and the remark was passed that the Pool looked quite naked. You could see London Bridge and the other side just as plain as them houses opposite. There was no craft—to speak of—at all in the Pool. Never see anything like it! Why, there's *one* granary open between the Bridge and Cherry Garden Pier!"

(This was in February, you must remember.)

Leaving the granaries you come to the huge timber docks and ponds with the names of the great wood-producing countries. There were the ponds and there were the gigantic piles of timber; but where were the buyers, where the great waggons? The timber trade was just then as dead as the grain trade. A boy or a clerk or two turned out of the wide yards when a distant bell announced that in other parts of the world there was still a little doing.

It was a truly melancholy sight!

Now between the timber ponds of the Surrey Commercial Docks and High Street, Borough, there are hundreds of streets and tens of thousands of little houses, for the most part occupied by respectable working people, many of whom depend upon the granaries, docks, and other waterside work, or belong to trades connected with these great businesses.

What can stagnation by the riverside mean to the dwellers in these countless streets, except at first poverty and at last destitution?

One of our Bible-women, who has worked at Rotherhithe now for seventeen years, says that forty streets of neat little houses have been built since she first began to visit here.

She is an indefatigable house-to-house visitor. There have been cases in which she has made a weekly call at one door for a whole year before admission has been gained; but then sickness or sorrow has opened the long-closed door to the Bible-woman, and the occupants of the house have been only too thankful to see her and accept help from her.

Here is a case she found only quite recently. The father was a plasterer by trade, but for three winters he had done very little, and all this winter he had been out of work. The building trade of Rotherhithe and Bermondsey has been in a bad way for some time, and first-rate workmen are often out of work, even when the weather is open.

This plasterer and his family were not only in want, but had

parted with everything. They had literally nothing—not a bed, not even a morsel to eat. The Bible-woman took them in some ready-cooked food, and they offer to pay her for it with pawn-tickets. Then she got a neighbour to stuff some sacks with shavings and make them a sort of bedding, and, reporting them to the Mission, they have been very considerably helped.

Another of our friends found a mother and her children actually crying for food, and the mother was just going to take a couple of cups, nearly all she had left, to sell to get a few monthsful. The visitor gave one of the children a penny as she stood talking, and the way the little creature looked up in her face told too sad a tale. "You can't think what it has been sometimes this winter," said a young woman to me a week or two ago in one of these respectable South London houses, "when some one has given our little boy a penny when we've had nothing at all in the house!"

"Only a penny!" we say who have perhaps never known the want of one; yet for a penny a woman will make an umbrella-cover and put it on its frame; for a penny she will make twenty-four button-holes and put on eighteen buttons—and what the lack of that penny means only those can know who have felt the want of it.

What is to be done to meet all this distress? The little spurt of charity is soon exhausted; the first touch of Spring will make too many kind-hearted but ill-informed persons fancy that all is right again. Alas, there is many and many a once bright home that will never again be what it was! The gales of this winter will leave behind them an amount of human wreckage terrible to contemplate.

Helpful individual friendship and friendliness with the sufferers, the strong, kind heart that against hope still hopes on for others, and again and again takes to those who are cast down the Divine message, "There is lifting up!"—this, *practically carried out*, will be the only means of restoring the survivors of this winter's storms.

These Glimpses of Out-of-Work London have truly been sad enough. I trust by next month I may have some break in the dark clouds to report. At present it is snowing again, and it is Saturday. Do you know what that must mean to Out-of-Work London?

(To be continued.)





THE HEART'S WEAKNESS.
A STUDY FROM ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.
BY WALTER J. ALLEN.

[See page 486.]

ONLINE SOURCE

1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1971) using a Shimadzu 1601 UV-Visible Spectrophotometer. The concentration of chlorophyll was expressed in mg/L.

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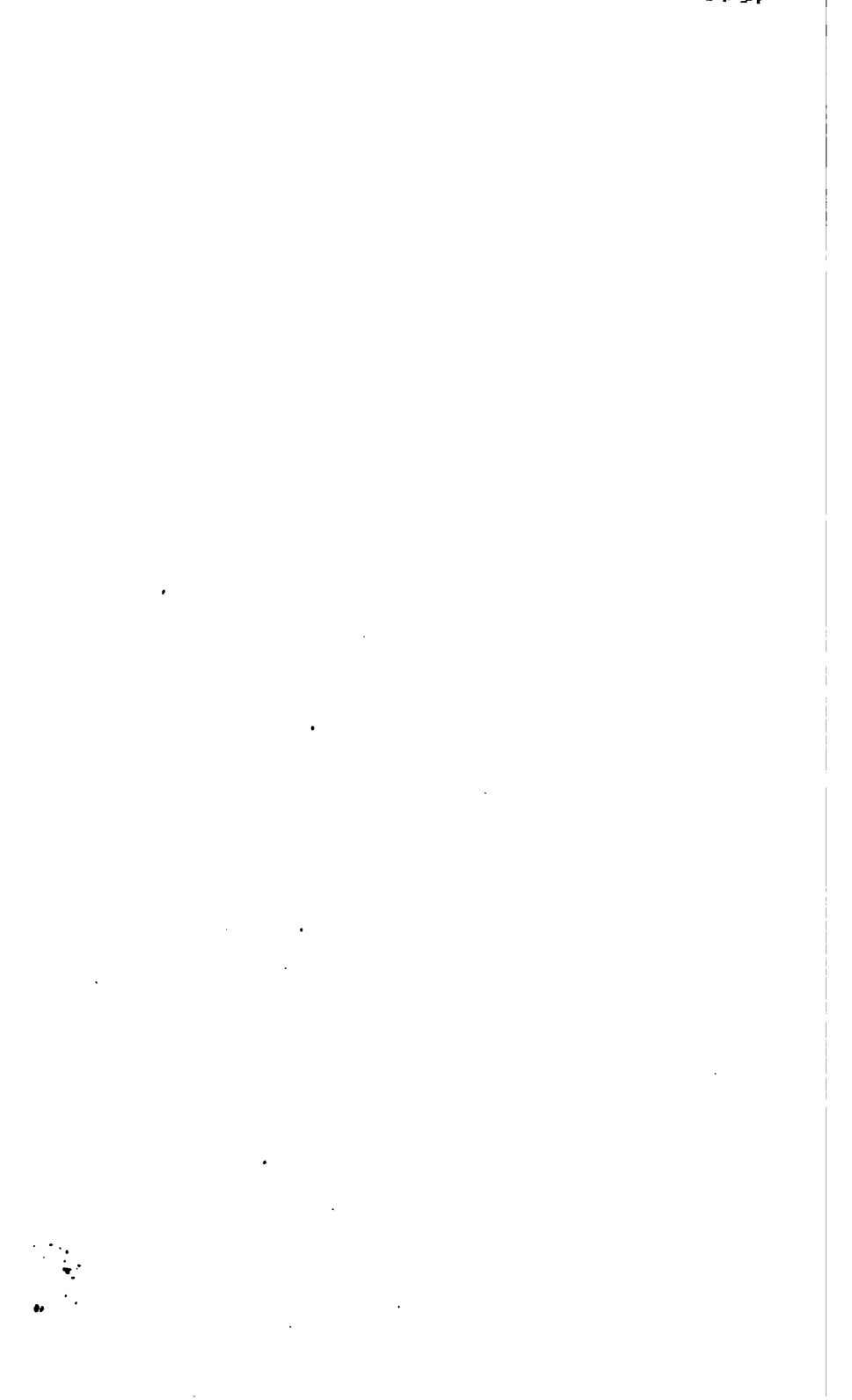
1. *Chlorophyll a* and *Chlorophyll b* were determined by the method of Arar and Collins (1987).

1. The first group of people who are likely to be affected by the proposed changes are those who are currently employed in the public sector. This group includes a wide range of individuals, from those who are employed in the public sector to those who are employed in the private sector. The proposed changes are likely to have a significant impact on the public sector, as it is the largest employer in the economy. The public sector is likely to be affected in a number of ways, including a reduction in the number of employees, a reduction in the number of hours worked, and a reduction in the number of jobs available. The public sector is also likely to be affected in a number of other ways, including a reduction in the number of people who are employed in the public sector, a reduction in the number of people who are employed in the private sector, and a reduction in the number of people who are employed in the public sector. The public sector is also likely to be affected in a number of other ways, including a reduction in the number of people who are employed in the public sector, a reduction in the number of people who are employed in the private sector, and a reduction in the number of people who are employed in the public sector.

1. The first group of people who are not in the majority are those who are not in the majority of the population. This group is the largest and most diverse. It includes people of different ethnicities, religions, and social classes. They are often the most vulnerable to discrimination and oppression.

1. *Chrysomelids* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) are the most diverse group of beetles found on plants. They are often found on leaves and stems, and some species are known to feed on specific plants. The most common species found on plants are the Colorado potato beetle and the bean beetle.

[illegible]



LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1886.

THE PITIFUL HISTORY OF JAMES NAYLER.

By A. C. BICKLEY,

AUTHOR OF "GEORGE FOX AND THE EARLY QUAKERS."

“AND indeed many thought he was too furiously persecuted by some rigid men,” said that high-minded statesman, Bulstrode Whitelock, in speaking of the sufferings of Nayler; and of all those who have written dispassionately on the question during the two centuries which have elapsed since this miserable enthusiast gave such scandal to the grave burgesses of Bristol, not one has been found to take the side of these “rigid men.”

The sufferings of Nayler were so terrible that they can never be forgotten, and their severity is too apt to hide the true circumstances of the case. Had he been only censured, his punishment would still have been unconstitutional and he himself a sufferer that others might be terrified. Besides this, his case is a curious example of the powerlessness of the Protector during the last few years of his life.

James Nayler was born in a tiny village near Wakefield in 1616. His father was a yeoman, who by dint of hard work managed to leave his son what, in those days of simple living, was a respectable competency, as well as to give him sufficient education to write with some degree of taste. James states that he married soon after attaining his majority, adding curiously enough, “according to the world.” When the civil war broke out he left his young wife to serve as a private in the troop commanded by Lord Fairfax, but he distinguished himself so often that when he left the army he was quartermaster of Major General Lambert’s regiment. In 1649 a severe illness disabled him for further service, and returning to his native village, he became a farmer, and a leading member of a congregation of Independents which met in a neighbouring village. When he unhappily came under the notice of Parliament, it was alleged that he was turned out of this church for blasphemy and “uncivil carriage to one Mrs. Roper;” but as no proof was offered, and as it was then the custom to make every imaginable imputation of villainy against a religious opponent without troubling about the foundation, this may be

dismissed as a mere malicious fabrication, although that he did kiss the said Mrs. Roper, and that Mrs. Roper did kiss him, is not improbable, James never being averse to that osculation between brethren and sisters known as the kiss of peace. That he was not contented with the teaching of the sect he had joined is certain, and it is very probable he was a thorn in the side of the congregation. As a matter of fact, he was always somewhat fanatical in religious matters; but then, so were nearly all his neighbours. England was at that time torn with conflicting religious parties, and the man who was not fanatical was looked on always with sourness, generally with suspicion.

Nayler had been following the plough for about two years when George Fox visited Wakefield, and James went to hear him. Conscious of spiritual needs unsatisfied by his creed, he was inclined to be won by the rough eloquence of the "man in the leathern breeches," and after a long conversation with Fox, he was, to use a favourite Quaker expression, convinced, and openly threw in his lot with the Friends. For nearly a year longer, however, he continued quietly at home, until, when one day he was at the plough-tail, he imagined he heard a voice bidding him, "Go out from his kindred and from his father's house, having a promise given with it that the Lord should be with him." Intoxicated with joy, he left the field half-ploughed, and hurrying home, began to prepare for his journey, until he reflected that no direction where to go or what to do had been given, when with shame of face and a guilty conscience he returned to his work. That Nayler should have felt guilty when he had no opportunity of obedience reveals a curious state of mind, though one which students of early Quaker literature know to have been common at this period. For a few weeks he went on with his daily work as if nothing had happened, until "the wrath of God was upon him, so that he was made a wonder to others, and it was thought he would have died," but "being made willing to obey he got better." A friend called to see him, and James, intending to go only a little way home with him, had got a mile or two from his home when he felt "himself commanded to go to the west." Ignorant alike of his destination and the purpose of his journey, unprovided with money or clothes, and apparently without even sending a message to his wife, he went to the "west." On his arrival there, "it was given to him what to declare, and thus he continued, not knowing one day what he was to do on the morrow." What his wife might think of his absence does not seem to have occurred to him.

Where lay the west to which he went we shall never know; probably it was some village westward of Wakefield, but certainly not to what we now call the West of England, for a week later Fox chronicles a visit to Swarthmore Hall, the early head-quarters of Quakerism, when Nayler was his companion. On this journey he experienced his first taste of persecution, for at Walney some forty

men tried to drown Fox, and as he managed to escape fell upon Nayler, and nearly beat the life out of him. The petty riot arose from a silly woman choosing to believe that "the first Quaker" had bewitched her husband into becoming one of his followers. Somewhat later in this same year James appears as party to a trial at Lancaster, and still later as one who suffered much from the violence of "certain priests in Westmoreland"—priests being the proper Quaker term for paid ministers of any denomination whatsoever. Before the year closed, he was, with Francis Howgill, a like-minded friend, committed to Appleby gaol on a charge of blasphemy, at the instance of some preachers. The friends were tried at the sessions, but their accusers were unable to substantiate the charge sufficiently to procure a conviction, although when Quakers were concerned this was a scandalously easy matter. The laws against blasphemy were then even vaguer than now, and each magistrate seems to have had his own code, which usually meant dismissing charges against those to whose opinions he inclined, and coming down heavily on all others. It is hardly necessary to say that scarcely any magistrates inclined towards Quakerism. Legally, of course, Nayler and Howgill should have been liberated, but the ministers of Lancashire and Westmoreland having petitioned against it, the justices openly allowed that they dared not face the wrath of these divines, and sent them back to prison until they could "answer" the petitions. After being in prison several weeks, James made his "answer" by publishing a tractate which he called "Truth cleansed from Scandal," and was duly liberated, which, considering the tract is singularly vituperative, is certainly remarkable.

For two years James Nayler continued to preach in the northern counties, and then, unhappily, he came to London. He seems to have had misgivings as to the wisdom of the act, for he says in the "Life of God in all," a little tract in which he describes the causes of his fall, that "he entered the place in the greatest fear, in spirit foreseeing that something terrible was to befall him."

One of the justices who sat on the bench when he was tried for blasphemy at Appleby was named Gervase Benson. Almost immediately after the trial he became a Quaker, and is the first Friend who is known to have visited London. Probably the next was Howgill, Nayler's companion at the trial. Benson appears to have been merely a visitor, but Howgill came as a missionary, and speedily gathered a small congregation, which met in a house in Watling Street, burnt down by the great fire, over which he presided, till a female preacher, Annie Downer, came to town, when it seems to have been given into her charge. Howgill and Burrough—another popular Quaker minister—however, continued to preach, and before the end of this year, 1653, Quakerism was only less flourishing in the metropolis than it was among the Cumberland Hills.

From the time of his entering London till that of his escape in Bristol it is difficult to trace Nayler's history clearly; it was one which no Friend cared to remember, and certainly not to record, while he was too insignificant for opponents to trouble about. All that is certain is that he preached so often and well as to become an object of adulation to certain weak sisters, who compared his eloquence with that of his fellow-ministers greatly to their disadvantage, and even went so far as to create disturbances when Burrough and Howgill were preaching. These grave ministers remonstrated, and at length severely and publicly reproved their erring sisters, who, so far from being silenced, trumped up a number of petty charges against them, and submitted the matter to Nayler with the hope of making a quarrel between them; and great was their disappointment at his having the good sense "not to appear forward to condemn them." His reluctance caused one of his admirers to exclaim in a tone of bitter reproach, "I looked for judgment, but behold a cry," which meaningless sentence, or rather, petty exhibition of spite, he took as a sign of deep grief, or possibly even as a "divine leading." If we may judge from what is known of Nayler's early life and his writings, he seems to have been over-ready to look for a "divine leading" in everything, and directly he fancied he met with one to have acted on it without attempting to apply it to the test of reason. Certain it is that from this time he was a dupe in the hands of a number of weak-brained enthusiasts and as open to flattery as a silly girl, and, as a natural consequence, became estranged from the more sober-minded of the Friends. Not content with verbal flattery, his admirers about this time commenced to write him letters full of perfervid nonsense, actually styling him "the Everlasting Son of Righteousness," "The Fairest among Ten Thousand," and other names even more blasphemous. Foolish enough not to destroy them, these silly letters were afterwards produced to secure his condemnation. Some years later he explains his conduct by saying that he was at this time in a "state of darkness," and "feared to restrain his followers lest he might offend what was right in them . . . forbearing to judge them in a spirit of humility, and receiving their homage not as honour done to his person but to the extraordinary manifestation of Christ which he continued to think he possessed." George Fox sums the whole up by remarking that he "was very dark" and "ran into imaginations."

Probably these ridiculous performances took place in 1656, for we can gather from the sixteen pamphlets he published during the preceding year that he was not then separated from the Friends; not, by the way, that he ever did separate from them—they disowned him.

During the year 1656, while on a preaching expedition in the West of England, George Fox was thrown into prison at Launce-

ton, and this coming to the ears of the Quakers in London, quite a party set off to visit him, which, considering the difficulty and expense of travelling in those days, argues a feeling of deep personal affection for the "first Quaker." Perhaps hoping that his leader's good offices might bring him once more into unity with the sect, Naylor went with the Friends. No one can doubt that James was a warm-hearted man, and he may have been one of those who anxiously begged to be allowed to take Fox's place in prison. As soon as the party reached Exeter they were arrested and sent to gaol, according to an anonymous tract, as vagrants, where they lay till released by order of the Council. Naylor was probably liberated before the rest, and went away, but he had not gone more than twenty miles when he was fetched back and fined twenty marks for not taking off his hat in court; after which he stayed in Exeter. It is highly improbable that his fanatical adherents had gone into Devonshire with him, but it was not long before some of them joined him there, for it is recorded that while in Exeter gaol, some women, much to the disgust of the Friends, came and kissed his feet, and that when he left it was with a man walking bareheaded before him. In his "Journal," George Fox hints at a disturbance, probably about this; for the founder of Quakerism had obtained his release, and visited in confinement the very people who had come nearly two hundred miles to comfort him. Naylor does not seem to have been present at the first interview, but met Fox on the following day, when he received in a slighting manner some advice from his leader, yet offered to kiss the giver. Fox, who had previously written him a strong letter of remonstrance, which James had treated as he did the advice, roughly refused the salute. "Thou hast turned against the power of God; I will have none of thy kisses." The two parted but lukewarm friends, if not, indeed, as tacit enemies. "He was dark and much put out," is the comment Fox makes on this interview.

Still the man in the leathern breeches made one more effort to arrest Naylor's folly. "James," he wrote, "thou hast judged and written thy scrub and false letters against him; thou shouldst not. Thou shouldst not deal so presumptuously against the innocent . . . And, James, it will be harder for thee to set down thy rude company than it was for thee to set them up (if thou dost ever come to know and own Christ), whose impudence doth speak and blaspheme the truth."

Naylor now turned his back on Exeter and set out for Bristol, a city in which Quakerism was strong through persecution. During the journey his attendants took off their garments to spread under his horse's feet as he entered the different towns, and sang hymns in which they ascribed to him the highest conceivable attributes. As he entered Bristol a man named John Stranger walked before

him, while the women sang, "Holy, Holy, Holy," &c., and treated him with the reverence due to a divinity.

Bristol was a well-regulated city, but it did not like Quakers, perhaps because, like all seaports, it cherished certain convenient vices which the Friends had been forward to condemn, and Nayler had scarcely entered the streets when he and his followers were seized and clapped into prison. This, there can be no doubt, was a necessity for the well-being of society; it would have been for the well-being of Nayler had he been sent to a madhouse instead, for the man's head was turned with vanity.

It seemed much more terrible to the good citizens of Bristol that Nayler should passively receive homage than that the others should have offered it, and his silly followers were retained in prison merely to secure their witnessing against him. His crime was considered too serious for the Bristol magistrates to judge, besides there was no law by which they could punish him adequately, so they remitted the matter to the Parliament, which took the undignified and unconstitutional step of forming itself into a criminal court. A committee of examination was named and Nayler was sent to London to appear before it.

The committee commenced its inquiry by endeavouring to rake up what scandal they could regarding Nayler's past life. Much that they got was utterly false, the rest easily explainable to a dispassionate person. It consisted chiefly in the old tale regarding Mrs. Roper and some alleged improprieties in Somersetshire with his female votaries. What foundation there was for the former we have seen, and for the latter it seems to have been equally vague. The committee next took each name of adoration which Nayler was said to have been called, and examined into its truth. Even the terms in the letters—which by merely reading he could not be reasonably held to have connived at—were treated as gravely as if he had written them.

The first charge against him was that he "had assumed the gesture, words, honour, worship, and miracles of our Blessed Saviour!" It was complained that his appearance, even to the colour of his hair and the manner of cutting his beard, was like that which tradition reported to have belonged to Christ, and the indictment positively recounted the supposed physical aspects of our Lord! Certainly such a travesty of justice was never enacted before, yet none of the members of the committee seem to have been alive to the absurd illogicality of the proceeding. If Nayler's face and figure did agree with traditional report, was he to blame? Unhappily, his complacent imitation of the entry into Jerusalem lent substance to the latter part of the charge.

Each of his followers was repeatedly cross-questioned. One Dorcas Erbury allowed that she had spread her garments before him, and so did another woman, pleading in defence that it was "in obedience to the Lord." Hannah Stranger stated that being

"commanded" so to do, she had bent her knees to him, and her husband, John Stranger, pleaded the same authority—having walked bareheaded before the prisoner. When questioned, Nayler allowed that the witnesses had told the truth, and seemed fully satisfied that they had only acted in obedience to divine commands. To the charge of ascribing to him blasphemous honours Nayler's followers confessed in effect if not in words, and James tried to justify them by explaining that they were paying homage to the divine spirit which dwelt in him as a believer.

The most damaging evidence was that of Dorcas Erbury, an utterly foolish fanatic. She stated that while in Exeter gaol she was dead for two days, and that Nayler laid his hands upon her and raised her to life. In reply to a question as to the truth of this, he said, "If you speak of such death as you may understand, she was dead"—a mysterious answer which produced a demand for further explanation. "I shall say little of myself in that thing," was all he said. On being asked whether he raised her from the dead, he replied that he could do nothing of himself, but clearly implied that when he laid his hands on her head "there came a power from above," thereby virtually admitting the correctness of the charge. His answers throughout the examination were vague, shuffling, and unsatisfactory, though doubtless intended to be impressive; like many of the primitive Quakers, he delighted in being so mysterious as to be well-nigh unintelligible. It is sad to think how much these good people suffered because they would not give a plain answer to a plain question.

The gaoler affirmed that while in prison James usually sat in a chair with his friends round him, singing, "Holy, Holy," &c., and that he never showed any dislike to such worship, which there is every reason to believe was the simple truth. Just before the examination closed Nayler said, "I do abhor that any of that honour that is due to God should be given to me, as I am a creature. But it pleased the Lord to set me up as a sign of the coming of the Righteous One, and what hath been done in my passing through the towns I was commanded by the power of the Lord. I was commanded to suffer such things to be done to the outward as a sign: I abhor any honour as a creature." As this was the only explanation he could give, the examination was closed, and the committee reported that James Nayler was guilty of blasphemy.

The debate as to the punishment which should be awarded occupied the House no less than twelve times. Some were for sentencing him to be hanged, but Bulstrode Whitelock argued that blasphemy was not punishable with death either by the laws of God, nature, or man, and the majority concurred with him, though it is to be feared that his argument made his name unsavoury to the bigots. Curiously enough, the House refused to sanction Nayler's hair being cut as a part of his punishment.

On the 18th of December he was brought to the bar to hear his sentence. He asked humbly enough what was the charge against him. "You shall learn it from your sentence," brutally replied Widdrington, the Speaker, and then he announced that the decision of the House was—"That James Nayler be set in the pillory with his head in the pillory, in the Palace Yard, Westminster, during the space of two hours on Thursday next, and be whipped by the hangman through the streets from Westminster to the Old Exchange, London, and there likewise to be set in the pillory, with his head in the pillory, for the space of two hours on Saturday next, in each place wearing a paper containing a description of his crimes, and that at the Old Exchange his tongue be bored through with a hot iron and then he be there stigmatized in the forehead with the letter B, and that he be afterwards sent to Bristol, and be conveyed into and through the said city on horseback with his face backward, and there also be publicly whipt the next day after he comes thither, and that thence he be committed to prison in Bridewell, London, and there be restrained from the society of all people, and there to labour till he shall be released by Parliament, and during that time he be debarred the use of pens, ink, and paper, and shall have no relief but what he earns by his daily labour." "A sentence," says Neal, "much too severe for such a simple, obstinate creature."

If such was to be the punishment of the passive, what sufferings could be sufficient for the active? Dorcas Erbury and the rest were restrained for a day or two and then liberated! In truth, the punishment was inflicted not for blasphemy, but in the hope that by making a terrible example of a person of note and influence, discredited though he was with the sect, the House might strike a blow at a creed it had reason to dread without making itself unpopular by passing fresh laws restraining religious liberty. It was a cowardly action, and, as subsequent events showed, as short-sighted as such cheap expedients usually are.

Nayler heard his sentence without flinching, and as he turned to leave the House said quietly, "He that prepared the body will enable me to suffer, and I pray He may not lay it to your charge."

On the Thursday he suffered the first part of his punishment, and was so much weakened by it that for its own sake the Parliament judged it wisest to postpone the remainder for a week.

One proof that the alleged blasphemy was not the real reason for Nayler's treatment is that a London merchant named Rich, who had written to the Speaker during the trial offering to prove that, scripturally speaking, Nayler was not a blasphemer, and who had accosted various members at the very door of the House with texts which conveyed imputations on their Christianity, and had even shouted within the dread precincts of the Court of Chancery that "the land mourned because of oppression," sang at the foot

of the pillory the very words for which his friend was then suffering. There was plenty of ground for believing Nayler insane, but this man was beyond doubt in his senses.

The brief respite the House had granted encouraged the Friends to hope that a petition for the annulment of the rest of the sentence might be favourably received, and accordingly one signed by "divers well-affected persons" was presented without delay. After expressing proper "abhorrence" of Nayler's crime, the petitioners sought to propitiate the House by likening it to the "terrors of Mount Sinai!" Here, surely, was blasphemy sufficient to stir the blood of any right-minded Puritan, yet the Commons passed it by, though they ignored the prayer of the petition. Possibly the delicacy of the flattery was too great to allow the rise of religious resentment.

The trial also afforded the House one more opportunity of showing its independence. Partly shocked at the sentence, partly disgusted at the way in which the House had received the petition, the Protector wrote to his "faithful Commons," and a phrase in his letter shows that he was alarmed for his prerogative. After disclaiming any intention of countenancing such crimes as he says "are imputed"—the word is significant—"to Nayler, and not knowing how far such a proceeding (wholly without us) may extend in the consequences of it, we desire the House will let us know the grounds and reasons whereupon they have proceeded." The lion had become old and weak, so after a fruitless debate the House agreed to shelve the letter unanswered. Finding the Commons disinclined even to reply to them, the petitioners now appealed to Cromwell to again intercede in Nayler's behalf, but the Protector seems to have declined; Nayler was too unimportant to be worth the risk of a second snubbing.

During the interval between the infliction of the two parts of Nayler's punishment in London the House took the extraordinary step of sending five Independent ministers to interview him. As they were despatched before the receipt of the Protector's letter, this could only have been done to justify their severity; and, if further proof be wanting, it is to be found that only Independents—a sect at bitter war with the Friends—were selected, and in the conduct of the ministers themselves, which to say the least was highly dubious. Nayler viewed their visit with undisguised suspicion and declined to reply to any questions unless the answers were written down and a signed copy left with the keeper of the gaol. At first they consented, but when he accused them of "seeking to insnare the innocent" they hastily burnt the papers and left. From Nayler's account of the conference it appears that he persisted in renouncing any adoration of himself as a creature, yet justifying the conduct of his followers. "Was Elisha guilty of blasphemy," he asked, "for he did not reprove the Shunnamite when she fell at his feet?"

The second part of the sentence was duly inflicted. The executioner held the red-hot iron in his tongue for a few moments so that all might see, and the brand to his forehead till the flesh smoked, but the sufferer never winced. When he was released Rich came forward, kissed him, and licked the wounds, and the silly women who had wrought the trouble sat beneath while he stood in the pillory. Three weeks later he was removed to Bristol, and there underwent the third part of his sentence. As he was led through the city, riding with his face to the horse's tail, Rich walked bareheaded before him, singing the very words which a couple of months before had so frightened the worthy citizens. The flogging was merely nominal, as a man was permitted to hold back the executioner's arm.

Nayler was now brought back to London and committed to Bridewell. A scurrilous anonymous tract affirms that he "attempted to carry on the imposture . . . and fasted three days ; but flesh and blood being able to hold out no longer, he fell to work to earn himself some food ;" but a petition to the Protector and his counsel from Nayler's wife, who had come from the north to attend on her husband, shows this to be a mere malicious fabrication. The petition records that, "Though my husband, after all his extreme sufferings, needs refreshment for his recovery, he is cast into the Hole in Bridewell, where the damp strikes up his legs like water, and he wants air and fire. He is kept under three keys, in three several men's hands, and is not allowed a candle, and I cannot see him unless four governors be present, nor may he have what I carry him. This is contrary to Parliament orders and yours, for you allowed me to come to him and expressly ordered him necessaries. His keepers are cruel, especially Win, who refused him some conduit water because there was a little sugar in it, and would not let him have a dish of turnips and other things I had taken to preserve his life. To harden your hearts they raise a false report that he starves himself and will not eat what is taken him, but he only refuses what is too strong for his weak state. They have kept his condition from me, and now the doctor orders him milk with sugar of roses. If he is to continue in prison, I beg that he may have air, fire, and candlelight, and that I may attend him and supply him with necessaries out of his own estate. But rather I beg his release, as he has suffered all the parts of your sentence and is only in prison during pleasure."

An order was instantly made that "The governor of Bridewell suffer James Nayler's wife to come to him, and see that he have all necessaries according to the order of Parliament."

From this it is evident that the House, probably at Cromwell's instance, thought it best to reconsider the question ; indeed, it seems to have been alarmed at its own action, for it took the unprecedented step of publishing a small tract to vindicate its

conduct, and permitted Nayler the use of pen and paper, as is shown by the number of pamphlets he wrote while in prison. Indeed, it is probable that he was even allowed a holiday, for Whitehead, in his journal, records that Nayler was with him in Westmoreland in 1657, and there is reasonable proof of the correctness of the statement.

During the earlier portion of his imprisonment Nayler's fanatical followers were constant visitants and attempted to renew their worship, but before many weeks had passed by, quiet and meditation had brought the visionary to his senses, and he began to write pamphlets denouncing the error of his ways.

In 1659 Parliament ordered him to be released, and almost his first act was to go to Bristol and there make a public confession of his folly. The Bristol Quakers had undergone considerable persecution, and their prospects suffered no small injury through his conduct, yet they were sufficiently generous to forgive him and welcome him to their homes, and, what is more, to abstain from reproaches.

From this time till his almost tragical death in 1660 little is certainly known about him. Towards the end of that year he set out to visit his Yorkshire home for the first time since his arrival in London, probably for the first time since he left it so hurriedly eight years before. As he rode through Huntingdon, a Friend remarked that he was "in a frame of mind so awful as that he appeared to be redeemed from the world." That same night he was picked up in a field near the village of King's Rippon, and from the condition in which he was found, it was conjectured he had been knocked down and robbed. Though he recovered consciousness and lived some days, possibly from some scruple of a conscience always over-sensitive, he would give no account of the matter. "You have refreshed my body, the Lord refresh your souls," he said to the people who tended him, and declined to allow any of his friends to be sent for. So ended a life most miserable, yet neither undignified nor useless.

For the benefit of those interested in such matters, it may be mentioned that Nayler is said to have been "a man of ruddy complexion, with brown hair and slank (*sic*), hanging a little below his jaw bones; of an indifferent height, not very long-visaged, nor very round; close-shaven, a sad and downcast look and melancholy countenance, a little band close to his collar, with no band strings, his hat hanging over his brows, his voice neither high nor low, but raised a little in the middle." As this description is taken from a tract which declares that Quakers consider the Bible ought to be burned, and that they do not believe in another world, it may be merely conjectural, and possibly the only accurate glimpse to be obtained of Nayler's appearance is in the brief note in which Ellwood, Milton's secretary, records his astonishment at the lucid way in which James could argue, and his surprise at the manner

in which one who appeared "a plain, simple husbandman or shepherd" could "handle the subject with so much perspicuity and clear demonstration."

A MODERN OBERON.

CHARGE! And with lily-lance well held in rest
A child came speeding o'er the shaven grass.
The linnets whispering in their leafy nest,
Sang him their sweetest as they heard him pass;
Then watched with jewel-eyes th' unequal fray
'Twixt boy and roses, as with shouts of glee
He stormed the crimson banners spray on spray,
And waved his lily-lance in victory.

'The August sunshine through the sheltering boughs
Came pouring in a long continuous stream
Of molten glory, and athwart his brows
It cast an aureole, whose flickering gleam
Awoke the beauty in the childish eyes,
As, resting with his lilies in his hand,
—A very Oberon in modern guise—
He stood the conqueror of Fairyland!

Then homeward in a stately, martial way,
The rebel-roses at his careless feet,
He marched triumphant, and an amorous ray
Of golden sunshine, that had found him sweet
And brave and king-like in his recent fight,
Crept softly upward to the dimpled breast
And lay there lovingly, as bathed in light,
He passed contented to his noonday rest.

JEDDAH AND THE MECCA PILGRIMS.

IT is not often one hears of Jeddah—notable as the jealously-guarded sea-port and key to the great citadel of Moslem superstition and devotion, Mecca—for this reason, that steamers rarely visit it, lying solitary as it does, far out of the way of the great trans-oceanic thoroughfare. It so happened, however, that during a voyage from Venice to Bombay, we got a chance of seeing this sample of Arabian and Egyptian towns, planted, like most of them, in the midst of trackless sandy deserts. As the gateway towards the realization of the life's dream of tens of thousands of pilgrims who annually stream towards Mecca from all quarters of Mahommedanism, perhaps a slight description of the town and some of its pilgrim arrivals may not be uninteresting.

One fine October morning we steamed away from the Grand Esplanade of the “Queen of the Waters,” while a knot of people on the quay kept waving handkerchiefs till we glided out of sight and pursued our course down the Adriatic. We passengers were a varied collection of German, French, Swiss, and English, including a lady and gentleman from Scotland. Among the ship's company, the only Briton was the chief engineer; and as he was looked upon as a foreign element by the Austrians and Italians, continual skirmishes arose between them, which unexpectedly varied the monotony of our sea-voyage. Needless to say, we, his country-people, sympathized with the engineer, a sturdy, honest fellow, whose great sin appeared to be that he was very popular with the passengers, while the captain was not. The latter, a vehement southern Italian, on some imaginary plea forbade the engineer the quarter-deck, while we on the other hand sought his company at his cabin-door, rather to the captain's annoyance. A perfect nightmare on board, however, was the cook, an Italian, who sent the food to table swimming in grease. Our foreign fellow-passengers did not seem to quarrel much with this rather Arctic diet in a temperature of 90° in the shade, but on the contrary seemed to pity our feeble appetites that induced us to dine chiefly on the fruit dessert. Despite, however, the malefactions of the cook, who, as one of his victims revengefully observed, earned being cooked in his own grease, we managed to reach Port Said in tolerable health and spirits, and anchored close to the shore. On landing, we at once supplied ourselves with “salar topies,” or pith hats, to protect our heads from the too fervid sun.

The natives, principally Arabs and Egyptians, looked an ill-favoured, almost truculent pack, especially those that lounged along the harbour; and a certain want of order and cleanliness seemed to proclaim Oriental rule throughout the irregular little town, built on a point of the sandy desert. Here we were obliged to lie all night till the prescribed hour of six o'clock in the morning, when we were admitted into the Suez Canal—the wonderful uniting link between the two oceans. At its opening, when the sea-water was first admitted into it, it filled a large low-lying tract of the sandy plain, which now presents the curious spectacle of two little far inland seas—the Salt Water Lakes—through the midst of which the canal passes. Here we have the same deep blue of the outside sea, with plenty of fish, and porpoises bounding about in great numbers on the surface.

Then once more we are into the narrow ditch-like canal, where we still have the same clear blue water and plentiful fish, which latter, Egyptians in canoes and queer Noah-Ark like crafts are angling for. So near do the banks seem as you look down upon them from the lofty decks of the ship, that you almost fancy you could leap ashore; and in reality, so close are they that one great wave caused by the motion of the ship keeps preceding us, rolling up on the banks, while another follows, closing up the vacuum and silting down more or less sand from each side; and at times a strong current like that of a river is visible as the tide ebbs and flows. Wherever there is a bend in the canal you see the spars of big ships rising out of the sand as if they were crossing the desert by virtue of enchantment! About mid-way in this liquid high road, a broad flight of steps rises from the water's edge, and leads to a pretty mimic chateau, marking the place where the Empress Eugénie opened the canal.

Towards evening we entered the Gulf of Suez, and no sooner are we sighted from the harbour than native dhows come flying out like a regatta, laden to the gunwales with human freight. Boat upon boat surround us, till we wonder where all the human cargo is to be stowed away. It consisted of pilgrims bound for Mecca, who had arrived from all quarters of the East, and were now to be our fellow-voyagers as far as Jeddah. They were mostly poor types of the *genus homo*, low in physique, and seemingly corresponding in intellect. It had cost most of them the entire savings of their lives to accomplish this journey, coming as they did from Singapore, the Malay Peninsula, Ceylon, India, Southern Arabia, Zanzibar, the Valley of the Nile, Turkestan, and even Constantinople itself; but all were animated by the same burning fervour, believing if they once got within the walls of the sacred city they were sure of never-ending bliss hereafter. Each carried one or two brass dishes and a bag of cereals, along with an offering to present to their great prophet Mahomet. Some of the better off had mattresses to squat on *à la Turc*, and for

days they would sit thus, hookah in hand, with scarcely a few inches of space to vary their position, while we steamed down the Red Sea. Some, who could afford the expense of two wives, guarded them with jealous care, and seemed quite roused when any of the gentlemen passengers on the quarter-deck happened to look down in their direction. The wives, in some cases, were sisters, and yet seemed to be on most amicable terms, while their husbands killed time by rolling up cigarettes for each in turn.

Scarcely a square inch of deck could be seen, so huddled together were the family groups; and we got ample opportunity of sketching some of the extraordinary and incongruous mixtures of race, features, and expression that characterized the pilgrims.

Most faithfully did they fast from sunrise till sunset, relieving hunger and monotony only by smoking, sleeping, and talking. The decline of the sun, bringing return of animation from their heat stupor, gave the signal for action, and soon little charcoal fires glimmered over the deck, where *dal bhât* (rice and lentils) was being cooked with spice and oil for their evening meal, or a simpler repast of parched maize or rice was being partaken of; and again in the early morning they had a similar meal.

Near the top of the Red Sea, on the African side, we got a view of Mary's Mount, the supposed site where the Holy Family rested on their way down to Egypt; and on our left rose Mount Sinai in the distance, the memorable spot where the law was delivered to Moses, and which is believed to have originated the name of "Law" to so many conical hills in our own country. Some miles further on, the place is pointed out where the water formed into walls to allow the children of Israel to reach the Promised Land and escape from Pharaoh and his doomed hosts.

As we came nearer the tropics the sun became intensely hot, and from beneath our awning on the quarter-deck we could look down on the pilgrims below lying broiling in the heat, sound asleep, as if insensible to all temporal discomforts in the strength of their fanaticism. We, however, had some cause for anxiety which we could not equally ignore, in connection with our impromptu pilgrim freight. Crowded together as the pilgrims were, we daily dreaded to hear of pestilence or disease breaking out among them, and each day that lessened our distance from Jeddah lessened also our anxieties. Hardly less dreaded were their little fires on deck, considering the quantity of petroleum we had stored in the hold, where if but a spark fell we might soon be figuring, sky-rocket fashion, in mid-air. In discussing our dangers, one passenger rather wickedly remarked that if ever we reached land in safety, the least we could do would be to sacrifice one of the Jesuit missionaries on board in gratitude for our escape. These three Jesuits were Germans, and, prejudice apart, pleasant, well-informed men. It was whispered they had taken up a contract to convert all Bombay at so much a head,

and whatever might be the case they seemed in high spirits at the new field of labour before them. Being Jesuits they were even more popular with us toleration-loving Britons than with the Roman Catholic officers and crew, of the ship, who had never a good word to say of them, but regarded them with jealousy and distrust. Before leaving Suez we had appealed to the agents about the unexpected pilgrim company and petroleum cargo that had been forced upon us, but the only reply we got was that they were too poor to refuse anything that came in their way—a view of the case which made us resolve that next time we voyaged through the Red Sea it would be *minus* pilgrims and petroleum.

When two days' sail off Jeddah the pilgrims began to overhaul their wardrobes, and produced snowy-white garments (the better off even to gloves) from out the nondescript bundles they carried. Indeed, some of the old women had dressed themselves days before, so as to be in full regimentals to do fitting honour to the first sight of the sacred land. Daily the pilgrims scanned the horizon for the longed-for shore, never tired of gazing in Jeddah's direction; and amusing it was when some of them, after gazing for hours as they thought towards Jeddah, were told that they were looking in the wrong direction. Some of the older Moslems looked so far spent that, even supposing they reached Mecca alive, it was doubtful if ever they would be able to regain their homes; but little cared they so long as they reached their goal alive. The presents they each and all carried to the temples varied according to their means. Some had coins and ornaments of gold and silver, but the poorer pilgrims carried only grain or anything they could easily spare—everything that could be turned into money being apparently acceptable to the priests of Mahomet. During the long days of scorching heat the Turks smoked their hookahs incessantly, filling the air with the heavy aromatic odour from the various spices of the tobacco.

At length Jeddah is sighted, and many solemn and reverential salaams does the unconscious land receive. We anchored about three miles from the town on account of the great coral reefs that lay all along the coast. A fleet of dhows soon surrounded us, and the pilgrims immediately began to bundle out, loading the boats down to the water's edge in their eager haste to be ashore. Hearing that the dreaded petroleum was fortunately to be landed here, and that we would be detained sometime coaling, we found we would have time enough to visit the town, which from the distance appeared snow-white and picturesque, like an Arabian-night's dream. The brilliant sun seemed to glitter on lofty palaces rising in terraces from the water's edge, while here and there a tall graceful palm reared high among them its dark green plumes. In the foreground the light blue sea shimmered over the coral beds, in the far background rose the dark dim range of rocks

that hide Mecca and bound the horizon; all seemed to wear a fairy-like appearance. Many circuitous tracks had we to make to escape the coral reefs, which every now and again we grazed harmlessly upon; some were just appearing above water, others, at all ranges of depth, rose into peaks and ridges of every style of graceful and fantastic outline.

As we neared the shore gradually the scene which first caught our eye began to change, and with the distance the illusion fled like a mirage, leaving before us the disenchanted reality. Here was no longer graceful palaces, but tawdry-looking rough square blocks of houses, of very gim-crack appearance, planted on the verge of an unbroken desert of sand, and the isolated palms looked as if they were wondering how on earth they had got there, and once there, however, they were managing to survive. The whole town was built of coral. Cut into large square blocks, they are placed so loosely together, with a sprinkling of sandy mortar between, that often daylight can be seen shining through; and it is a common saying that one heavy shower of rain would wash Jeddah into ruins, the entire absence of strong winds and rain being its salvation, and great excitement there was among the natives on the day of our arrival, by a threatening look of the clouds prospective of rain. A number of ill-favoured looking Arabs of every shade, from inky black upwards, gathered on the shore to watch our approach, and looked much surprised at seeing a lady's face with no attempt at concealment. Some of the more elderly, indeed, appeared to look on this as a grave offence, and the first engineer, who accompanied us, mentioned that on a former occasion they had even gone so far as to interfere with a lady who had been guilty of such impropriety! An angry pack of mongrels barked persistently at our heels as we landed, and we were glad of our body-guard of sailors armed with their oars to lay vigorously about them, inducing even the most incorrigible cur to keep a respectful distance.

We strolled leisurely through the bazaar, a long street canopied over with tattered mats as a slight protection from the baking sun, a protection of which the hornets and flies, equally with the Arabs, availed themselves. The principal goods exposed for sale on the stalls ranged on each side were hookahs, beads, and sweetmeats, the latter in the form of animals, mosques, ships, &c., the previous day having been a sugar festival. These confections were covered by fierce clouds of pugnacious hornets in possession that dared not be disputed, not to speak of black masses of flies that shared with them the spoil. Some native women passed through the bazaar with the usual long dark blue calico veils covering their faces, and, with the exception of two small apertures for their eyes, completely enveloping them. Down the centre of these overalls depended long strings of gold or silver coins, to show at a glance the wealth of the wearer. Hang-dog, greasy-

looking Moslems lounged and squatted by the sides of their stalls, all smoking hookahs as if it were the business of their lives, and looking as if we were taking a liberty in asking them to hand us their goods or accept payment for them. Emerging from this uninviting region of Arabs, greasy sweetmeats, mangy pariahs, hornets, flies, and dirt, we advanced, ankle-deep in sand, along a narrow street lined with high square houses, on the flat roofs of which the better-off class of women were to be seen promenading for air and exercise, their only means of obtaining these. A higher and whiter-looking house than the others marked out the British representative's, and we sent in our cards by an Arab porter standing at the entrance. Just inside the doorway was a tank for drinking-water, a scarce commodity and sometimes selling at the rate of even five shillings a gallon. This great necessity, or rather luxury here, can only be obtained by purchase, and that from one man, who leases at a high rental from his government the only wells allowed to be dug, and hawks the water round the streets in skins loaded upon camels and donkeys. The profits on this monopoly from the town, as well as from the immense stream of pilgrims for ever journeying on the Mecca route, must be considerable. Such is one of the ways by which the "Sublime Porte," as he is termed, replenishes his exchequer! It reminds one somewhat of the natives of India not being permitted to utilize the sea-water on their shores for the manufacture of that precious article salt, though, of course, between salt and drinking-water there is a wide gulf.

Presently the servant returned and conducted us up a series of steep stone stairs. While ascending these one felt in constant dread of treading too heavily or even leaning against the walls, in case of giving a shake that might bring the whole fabric toppling down, for every here and there daylight streamed through the walls in a way well to suggest the precaution. We never seemed to be coming to an end in our ascent, and still we mounted higher, still the walls grew more fragile. On one landing we noticed a number of office-rooms, filled with native clerks all busy writing, and on a higher, sleeping-rooms; but all the sitting-rooms were, we found, situated at the top of the house, to catch as much as possible of the higher and cooler air. At length we came to a halt, and were shown into a large eastern-looking apartment, where we were most hospitably received by the European resident. After a rest and refreshment we mounted yet another stair and found ourselves outside on the broad, flat roof of the house and the customary famous evening promenade of eastern cities. Here we got a wide and uninterrupted view all around. Seawards, the wavelets rippled over the coral reefs in the bay, where lay at anchor a Turkish man-of-war to protect the pilgrim interests, and a little further off we saw our ship loading and unloading. Away further out an occasional sail glanced in the sun of coasting ships or

native dhows, as they crossed to and from the African side; and rising out of the water we saw those terrible places of abode, the red-painted iron light-houses, like pillars of fire in the burning sun. Landwards, nothing but sand was visible as far as the eye could reach; not a tree, not a green speck to break the interminable waste. The long straight road to Mecca lay before us, white with pilgrims all eagerly pressing forwards over the weary forty miles that separated them from their goal.

Christians, it appears, are not allowed to set foot on this road, but one if not two Englishmen in disguise have risked the journey to the holy city, penetrated into its sacred places, and given us written accounts of their experiences. Just outside the town two solitary and daily-watered trees mark the supposed grave of Eve, and between these stands a little mosque, visited by numbers of Mecca pilgrims, who leave donations to the Moslem priest in charge.

By this time the air was getting heated and oppressive, and the strong light of noon nearly blinded us; for though it was October, one of Jeddah's cold months, if such an expression can be used, yet we were thankful to retreat downstairs to the cool, semi-darkened dining-room where tiffin awaited us. Luxurious lounges, settees, and scroll cane chairs with foot-rests were ranged around the room, where a cool coloured grass matting interwoven with tasteful designs covered the floor. Broad-leaved tropical plants, growing in large green tubs, imparted a refreshing air of coolness to the room, where the punkah swung vigorously over our heads. At the far end was the luncheon table, surrounded by the only straight-backed chairs we saw, and as we encircled the mahogany our wants were attended to by broad-faced grinning Arab boys. There was a tempting display of fruit in the centre of the table, suggesting mysterious thoughts as to whence it had come. Amid nothing but sea and sand, yet we had melons, grapes, pine-apples, plantains, oranges, pummeloes, and a variety of nuts, even to the hazel, of which several large boxes, we noticed, were landed out of our ship. Our meal consisted of eggs served up in various forms, cold chicken, tongue, &c., &c., and finally curry to wind up with. We would have fared badly, however, despite the abundance, but for the help of two servants, who kept up a continual switching over our heads with long grass dusters upon the hungry clouds of flies that pounced in dense black masses upon every article of food. Through the numerous glass windows and semi-closed venetians outside, we could look down on the camels and donkeys far below, toiling over the soft, sandy streets; and in shady corners natives enjoyed their mid-day siesta, not in the least disturbed by stray camels or dogs that came sniffing all around them or assumed the recumbent beside them. Men were going about laden with skins of water, selling it from door to door like milk, and occasionally a closely-veiled Egyptian or Arab girl hurried along as if ashamed to be seen in the open street.

As the afternoon advanced we had to think of returning to our quarters on board ship, and the tide being now high we got more quickly over the coral reefs, and reached our steamer just as she had been thoroughly cleansed and purified.

Two days more brought us to the foot of the Red Sea, where twelve rocks, termed the Twelve Apostles, are scattered close to the narrow straits of the "Gate of Tears," Babelmandeb, causing great anxiety to the captain till we had cleared them and rounded into the Arabian Sea. A few hours more found us lying off Aden. Hidden behind a long bare ridge of rocks, only custom house, shipping and agents' offices, &c., appear from the sea, and you see people, camels, and vehicles threading their way among the dark bare rocks to the town behind. No sooner did we anchor about half a mile from shore than a little fleet of cockle-shell canoes, each with one occupant, came dancing out over the waves, and surrounded us. The owners had come to dive for buxeese, which was their trade, and seemingly only means of livelihood. Any of them could easily have carried his boat under his arm; and when jostled and upset it was emptied again in a trice by the owner as he floated alongside and then scrambled into it again. The passengers amused themselves by throwing small silver coins into the water and watching them dive, and this sometimes they did from great heights off the rigging, reappearing after a long interval, lively as ever, and in possession of the coin. To save time they sometimes dived right below the steamer to reach coins that had been suddenly dropped from the other side to test their racing powers; and occasionally they would vary the monotony of sitting in their canoes by swimming behind while they pushed them on before them, among the different ships lying at anchor. Nothing could be more at home in the tepid water than these uncouth black, African-Arab boys. Another group of natives now boarded us, carrying bunches of magnificent ostrich feathers for sale at most tempting prices, and others brought coral jewellery, scented wood ornaments, necklaces of Jerusalem camel bones, crosses of Lebanon cedars, and wristlets of threaded shells, all of which were so familiar in the late Forestry Exhibition in Edinburgh.

On shore we found that water was even a greater luxury than at Jeddah, not because of an interdict on digging wells, but because the water being brackish is little used for drinking except by the poorer natives, while the European supply is daily distilled from the sea. A place more barren of vegetation it is impossible to conceive, and rain therefore is nearly as rare as at Jeddah, a shower being an occurrence of every three or four years. Goats, which are supposed to exist on anything and under any conditions, are all they have to depend on for fresh milk and butter.

One of the sights of the town is the reservoirs, adapted from the natural hollows and clefts in the high black rocks overlooking Aden, and which are fitted up to collect and retain every drop of

rain-water that trickles down from the wide area above. Close by them is quite a refreshing little garden of shrubs and plants, carefully watered twice a day, and fondly termed the "Botanical Gardens"—a favourite evening resort and promenade of the residents. So great is the heat of Aden, lying between the heated sea on the one hand and the background of heated rocks on the other, that it is a place to get out of and not into. Notwithstanding all this it is said to be very healthy for a tropical climate.

Leaving Aden we made straight for Bombay across the Arabian Sea, which all the time was like a vast smooth lake. As we anchor before the great Eastern city, so beautifully situated amid rich tropical vegetation, so clean and handsome, and so remarkable for the varied concourse of different race and nationality, our sea-voyage reaches its termination.

M. A. S.

A DOUBLE EVENT ; OR, 200 TO 1.

“YES, these used to be my quarters in the old days when I ran up to town from Aldershot. Ah, those were cheery times. By Jove! it's just as well one can't see ghosts of the future; it would have given me rather a start then, if I had looked out of the window and seen myself as I am now, at my billet at the corner.”

The speaker was the proprietor of the crossing at the corner of Powder Street, St. James's. He was sitting in my chamber in Powder Street smoking his short black pipe and drinking some whiskey and water.

Since I first came to live in Powder Street I had often as I passed his crossing wondered what this man's history had been. He was a man who had obviously seen better days, and yet was able to bear his fallen fortunes with philosophy, if not with resignation. Probably he ought to have been in the prime of his life, but his long drooping moustache had more white hairs than black in it, and his worn face and bent figure told a tale of hard times. His clothes were wonderfully old and tattered, but they looked as if they had been originally made for him, and had once been the fine feathers of a fine bird, while his battered shapeless old hat had something about it which suggested that it had been the work of a good maker. He never asked for alms with a cadger's whine, but he would remind the passers-by of his claims upon them by an easy gesture, much as one who was playing at loo would remind another player who had forgotten to do so to put into the pool. I used to notice that he usually had a little volume in his hand, which when business was slack he would intently peruse. At first I thought that it was some book of devotion. I am afraid I put down his motive in reading it to a desire to gain the good-will of the pious, though the passers-by were as a rule not much in that way inclined; but when I had a closer look upon one occasion I saw that it was a Ruff's Guide to the Turf. After a time I usually used to have some conversation with him when I passed, it was generally about the same subject, racing, and I found out that he was a very earnest student of public form, and that there were few big races on which some of the takings of the Powder Street crossing were not wagered. Although in the body he was present at the Powder Street crossing, in the spirit he was on Newmarket Heath, or at Ascot, or Epsom, or wherever the races might be going on, and he would always enjoy a talk about the last meeting

with any one who had been there. It was after I had come back from a Newmarket meeting that I asked him to come up to my chambers and discuss the doings there, over some whiskey and water. Rather queer company for me to keep, some people—my father the Dean of Bungay—would say; but I was always rather unconventional in my tastes, and I could not help having something like a fellow-feeling for one to whom the Turf had such strange fascination. It was on that occasion that he recognized the rooms, and this, and perhaps the whiskey and water, made him communicative and induced him to tell me something of his life.

“Yes, it was a confounded dream that sent me wrong,” he said; “it must have come from the devil; I wish he would send me another one like it, by Jove, though. It was when I was at an army crammer’s that I had it. Up to that time I had never gambled a bit or had any interest in a race except to have a shilling or two in a sweep. It was a few days before the Derby, and the other fellows were always talking about it, so I knew the horses’ names though I took little or no interest in the race.

“Well, one night I had a dream. I dreamt I saw the Derby run and won, and then I went to sleep and dreamt again, and by Jove, sir, that time I dreamt the Oaks. I had never been to Epsom then, but in my sleep I saw the grand stand, and the hill, and the Corner, as I have so often seen them since. I remembered the names of the horses I had seen win in my dream, and the next day I told the other fellows of it, and my description of what I had seen was so vivid that they were wonderfully taken by it and would have it that I must back my luck. I did; I had a tenner on the double event. I took the odds from a good man. A thousand to ten he laid me, and all the other fellows backed it for a sovereign or two as well. We all went to see that Derby and Oaks. The crammer saw that we were so much interested in the races that we might as well be at Epsom as in his study, for all the good we should do in getting ready for our exams, so he didn’t make much trouble about our going. Well, it was just like seeing something I had seen before, and the races came off just as they did in my dream, and when the numbers went up after the Oaks I had won my thousand pounds.

“I got paid all right, but the money did not do me much good. It went a short time after I had got my commission, and it left with a gambling devil in me which will never be sent out. I liked my regiment and the service well enough, only I liked racing better; I had one or two horses of my own in training, and what with backing them and other men’s it did not take me very long to go to grief. The wonder is that I lasted as long as I did, but my father died about that time and I had the old place to gamble away. Well, it went; our people had owned it since Henry the II.’s reign. They kept it all through the troubles in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, when they staked and lost much for the Stuarts, but I lost it over one St. Leger, and my commission and all I had but a few hundreds. With what I had left I went out to the colonies, to seek my fortune, and I didn't do so badly in South Africa, where I went; I had an ostrich farm out there, and was doing rather well, but even out there they have some sort of racing. It is a miserable dog-eat-dog game, every one trying to do every one else, and the robberies are even more barefaced than they are at home. But such as it was I took to it and at that wretched business I got broke again. After that I had a pretty hard time doing first one thing and then another; at one time I was in the mounted police force and I got maimed, losing some fingers, as you see, in a row with some bush-men. Then a relation died leaving me a little money and I came home again. Well, my experience ought to have kept me straight, then, you will say; my experience was just as useful to me as it is to nine men out of ten—I did exactly what I had done before and took to the Turf again. Yes, with exactly the same result, for again I was left without a penny, worse off than I had ever been before, for I was dead broke in England, the worst country in the world to get anything to do in. I hadn't any one to help me, for I had worn out my relations' patience and my friends'. If you come to grief you will find out how many friends you make while you are knocking about spending your money. Well, I had the experience that many a poor devil has had, and will have, answering advertisements and finding out they were all swindles or not meant for men like I was; I spent a few shillings in sticking one in for myself. By Jove, the answers that I got! Answers from money-lenders offering me terms to tout for them, answers from men who live by getting the last sovereigns some poor wretch has who has been made reckless by trouble. I got one from a clergyman who offered for five pounds to introduce me to the squire of his parish, who, he thought, would take me as a tutor for his boys. At last I got a billet, the one I have now. The man who had it before me had been in my troop in the old regiment, and when I passed by the crossing he recognized me. He had been rather a bad lot in the regiment, but I had done him some kindness and he hadn't forgotten it. He was as civil and respectful to me as if he thought that I wore a bad hat and ragged coat from choice, and I didn't look as if I often forgot to dine. He told me that he was not doing badly, and that he had laid by a little, only the weather told on him as his lungs were bad, and it ended in my taking the crossing from him to work on half shares. I daresay he must have thought it rather a queer job for his old captain to take to, but one who knows London street life as a crossing-sweeper does has seen queerer starts than that; certainly he didn't say much, but seemed glad of the chance of getting a straight man to work for him. He is dead now, and the crossing belongs to me; I don't

do so badly taking one day with another, and though it is hardly the work I should choose, there are lots of men who have had better positions than I ever had whom I don't envy; but the worst of it is, what I make all goes over some race or the other, for I have such bad luck, and the queer thing is, that though I seldom think of anything but races when I am awake, and haven't for all these years, I have never had another dream of one," concluded the sweeper, and he finished his whiskey and water and relit his short black pipe and in a few minutes he was talking about the horse which must win the Goodwood Stakes, with as much confidence as if he had been the most undefeated of plungers.

When I came back from my holidays that year I found my friend still at his crossing, but I noticed that he seemed rather out of spirits, and he used to have rather a dejected air as he conned his *Ruff's Guide* and smoked his short black pipe. It was not because he had lost money on the Leger, for which I had a fellow-feeling for him—that he took as a matter of course; nor was it because the winter was coming on, though that was enough to depress a delicate man who had to get his living in the open air; what worried him was the autumn handicaps—for once he was unable to come to a conclusion satisfactory to himself as to what would win. The fact that the conclusions he had arrived at before had almost always been wrong did not make this state of uncertainty less annoying to him.

"I can't get the hang of it anyhow," he would say; "the form of the year is all of a tangle;" and he would go into a long discussion about weights and performances. I must say I felt rather glad of this, and hoped for once that the earnings of the Powder Street crossing would remain in its proprietor's pocket. But he was by no means pleased, his hobby-horse had failed him, and with a bothered expression he read his *Ruff's Guide* and tried to unravel the tangled skein of public form.

However, one morning when I was in my chambers the servant of the house came up, with rather an indignant expression on her face, and said that there was a man below who wanted to see me. "I think, sir," she answered to my question as to who he was, "he is the party as sweeps the crossing at the corner, and from his manner I fancy as he has had something to drink. I told him as you never would wish to see the likes of him, but he wouldn't go away." "Show him up," I said, and the servant left the room saying that she would tell him to come up, with an expression of scorn which told me that she thought if I had no proper pride, she had. In a few seconds the crossing-sweeper came into the room and from his appearance I formed much the same opinion that the servant had. His face was haggard with excitement, and he seemed to be trembling all over.

"I have got them, I have got them!" he said as he came in.

"Yes, you look as if you had them rather badly. I didn't know you drank."

"Don't laugh at me, I have the winners of the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire—a dead certainty for a double event."

"Oh, that is all," I said without much excitement, for I had no great faith in the sweeper's tips.

"I tell you it is a certainty; I have had another dream. 'Matadore' wins the Cesarewitch, and a horse wins the Cambridgeshire whose name I don't know."

"That is just it," I answered; "we all know that, but we don't know the name."

"Yes, but I should know the horse again, and the colours, and the boy who rode; he wore a black cap, green jacket, red spots."

"Green and red spots! what beastly colours. But now you say so, by Jove, I know them!" I exclaimed. "They are Joe Levi's, that little thief of a Jew who keeps the public house in the Haymarket and has a few platers training with John Holmes."

"There, I told you so," he cried excitedly. "Let us see what Levi has in the Cambridgeshire; it was a black horse I saw win."

I sent for a sporting paper and got a calendar, and I found that Mr. Levi's black horse, the "Crow," was entered for the Cambridgeshire. He was in at six stone—a nice light weight for a five-year-old—and I saw that he had been backed at long odds. The crossing-sweeper was delighted. "At last my luck is going to turn. After all these years I have had another dream. Remember, when I dream I win," he exclaimed. "'Matadore' and the 'Crow,' they ought to give us long odds."

I remember having seen the "Crow" run at Bromley; he was a beast of a horse, probably the worst horse in training, I thought, and I tried to persuade the sweeper against believing there was anything in it, but it was useless to make any such attempt. There was no doubt about the horse, as I was sure about the colours, and it was the only horse Levi had in the race; and as for it having no chance, some one thought it had, for was it not being backed, though at very long odds? He felt strangely confident in his dream coming off and nothing I could say shook his confidence. It ended in my catching a good deal of his excitement, though I determined only to back his dream for a sovereign. The sweeper, however, was not so cautious, everything he had was to go on it, and he even sold his crossing, so that he could back his dream to win a large sum of money. We got fairly long odds—two hundred to one—the sweeper taking the odds to forty pounds, while I had a pound on. I never thought much about it after I made the bet, but the sweeper became an altered man. He still kept his crossing, as he had arranged to do that until the day of the Cambridgeshire; but he was restless and began to hate and feel ashamed of his life. "Not much more of this," he would say to

me as I passed by. "I hope none of these fellows who pass by will know me again when I have my money."

I did not go to the Cesarewitch that year; I had got tired of going to races, and sick with myself for wasting so much time and money on a pursuit which perhaps might take the same hold upon me that it had upon the sweeper. On the day of the race, however, I waited with some anxiety at the club for the telegram. "Matadore" had always been backed a good deal, and left off the night before first favourite, so I was fairly hopeful that the first event of our double event would come off. Sure enough, "Matadore" was the name I saw on the telegram, and I at once started out to tell the sweeper of our good luck. He took the good news wonderfully quietly. "I knew it," he said, "just as if I had seen the race; in fact, I have seen the race, and so I have the Cambridgeshire." That day the "Crow" began to be backed a good deal at Newmarket, and its price began to shorten. I wanted the sweeper to hedge and make certain of a good sum of money, but he refused to do so; in fact, if he had any money I believe he would have gone on backing it. He seemed to be perfectly confident that he would win, and began to talk of what he would do with his money as if he had already had it. He would talk about what he would do that winter, whether he would hunt in Leicestershire, or go to the South of France.

I went down to Newmarket to see the Cambridgeshire. The only bet I had on the race was the two hundred pounds I stood to win on the "Crow," and I began to feel half hopeful that I should win this money, which would be very useful to me, as I was hard up and in debt. As I read the papers in the train I saw that the "Crow's" price had come up to 20 to 1, and I noticed that the sporting prophets, who had at first howled at the idea of such a brute having a chance, now spoke much more guardedly. When I got into the inclosure some one touched me on the shoulder, and I heard a husky voice whisper in my ear, "Mr. Langdale, I've been a looking for you heverywhere; there is one you must back for the Cambridgeshire." The man who spoke to me was one of those hangers-on to the turf who get their living by haunting racecourse and training quarters and picking up bits of information, which they retail to their patrons. Sometimes he really did know something. Often he made sure of hitting on the winner by giving each horse in the race to one or other of his patrons. This day he refused to be repulsed by my telling him that I did not mean to back anything. I must have his information: he said he had given it to all his gentlemen; it was good, real good, and lowering his voice to a husky whisper, he said two words, the "Crow." "Yes, sir," he continued in a second or two, "it's the best thing as ever I 'ad; better than 'Cock Robin' for the Chester Cup as I put you on to; not put you on—well, as I put a lot o' my gents on to. Now look 'ere, this is true," he added

sorrowfully, as one who has a great truth to impart, but whose known character for mendacity stands in his way: "My brother Bill, he is in John Holmes's stable where the 'Crow' is trained, and I was down there last night and see'd Bill, and he told me about it."

"Well, what did he say?" I asked, telling him that I had backed the "Crow" already, but that I would give him a pound or so if it won.

"Well, sir, Bill let me know as it was a real good thing, and that they are certain of it, and he would have told me more only John Holmes comes up and catches him talking to me. He has an awful temper has John Holmes, and he didn't like Bill talking to me, for he know'd me, so he unchains the stable dog and sets it at me, and then he goes for Bill. As I hooks it away from the dog I hears Bill howling out. If Master Holmes knew Bill as well as I do I don't think he would care to knock him about as he did, for Bill ain't one to stand it quiet. But there, sir, you stick to what you have on the 'Crow,' and put a bit more on too," and the tout shuffled off to look for another of "his gents."

"Well, so far so good," I thought to myself. I did not feel very much confidence in the tout; still I thought that he seemed very much in earnest about what he had told me, and I could not help believing that there was something in it, and I certainly could not help hoping that there might be, for I wanted the two hundred for myself badly enough, and I could not but feel a great interest in the fortunes of my friend the sweeper. There was a horse trained by Knight which they were backing as they used to back red-hot favourites from that stable, and there was an Irish horse the sharps were all on, and Billy Nous, the big north-country bookmaker, had a mare on which it is said that he would win a fortune. The "Crow's" price was 100 to 6, and though there were some people always ready to lay those odds, there seemed to be money in the market to back it; and I was not surprised at this, for the people connected with Holmes's stable, though they were a very shady lot and men of more than doubtful character, always found money for their good things. Billy Nous seemed never to be tired of laying against the "Crow," and this I did not much like, for he had a reputation for not often making a dead set against a horse unless he knew something; still I had begun to be very hopeful. As I walked from the stand to the side of the course I saw the sweeper; he looked livid, jaded, and ill—worse than I had ever seen him before.

"I could not stand it any longer," he said to me, "so I came down to see the race. I hadn't enough money, so I had to walk a good bit of the way. I have said good-bye to the crossing, and have given it up."

"Poor fellow! What will he do for a living if it don't come off?" I thought.

When he saw the "Crow" he looked a good deal happier. "That's all right," he said; "it's the horse I saw in my dream, and the same boy; you see the dream is all right."

After that he did not seem at all troubled by the anxiety of Billy Nous, who was near us, to lay against the horse. I thought the "Crow" looked very much improved, and though he was an ugly brute, he could stride along.

They got off altogether after only one false start. Some horse whose name I did not know made the running for a bit. As they came nearer there was a cry of "The favourite is beat!" and Billy Nous's mare, "Our Emma," looked like a winner, but I saw the "Crow" coming up.

"'Our Emma' wins!" they were shouting out, when I heard the harsh voice of a well-known sporting baronet shout, "What is that black horse coming up? The 'Crow!' and the 'Crow' wins!"

"No, he don't; my mare wins, 'Our Emma.' An even five hundred 'Our Emma!'" shouted Billy Nous.

The baronet had just time to take the bet, and it was clear that the "Crow" must win; and he did by two lengths, "Our Emma" second.

As the horses passed the post I looked at the sweeper. He had turned pale and was very queer, and when, in a second or two, he spoke, there was a catch in his breath. "Just what I saw—and then I woke up—just what I saw. Well, you see my dream was all right," he said; and then, after he had thought for a second or two, he asked me to lend him some money, so that he could go and get something to eat at Jarvis's, for though he had eight thousand to draw on Monday, he had not sixpence until then. I lent him a fiver, and he went to get something to eat, while I went back to the inclosure. As soon as I got there I saw that something was wrong. The ready-money bookmakers would not pay over the "Crow." Nobody at first knew what it was about, but there was an objection lodged by Mr. Nous, the owner of the second. For some time all was confusion, and all sorts of rumours were going, but the general opinion was that there was something very wrong. "S'help me, I shan't go near 'em. It's all up; that imp of a boy has split—he's been and told Billy Nous. There will be heaps of proof against us. It's all your fault for hammering him so. I shall clear."

A string of oaths was the only answer, and as I looked round I saw that they were Joe Levi and Jack Holmes, the owner and trainer of the "Crow." They seemed to be making off. Soon I heard that the stewards wanted to see these gentlemen, and that they were not to be found. Then I met a friend of mine who, on a racecourse, always knew exactly what was going on. This very astute friend of mine was also good-natured, and when I told him that I had backed the "Crow," he let me know what was going on.

"Backed the 'Crow,' did you? Well, I shouldn't talk too loud about it. I am afraid that you have not the slightest chance of getting your money. The race must be given to 'Our Emma.' It is about the biggest swindle since the Running Rein case. The horse which won wasn't the 'Crow,' at all. It seems Levi got hold of a French horse exactly like the 'Crow,' only a good one instead of a bad one, and he has won with it. The boy, who knew all about it, has rounded on them. It seems Holmes, the trainer, thought that it was a nice safe amusement to beat the boy almost to death last night, though he knew enough against him to send him to penal servitude, and so Mr. Holmes's wild beast's temper has upset the apple cart. You ought to have backed 'Our Emma;' I did," said my friend, and he bustled off to get more information. He was rightly informed. In a short time every one knew all about it, and I shall never forget the scene of excitement that ensued when every one heard of the swindle that had almost been successful. There was no doubt about it, and there were men on the course able to identify the horse that won. It would have gone hard with Messrs. Levi and Holmes if the crowd had got at them, but they were not to be found. So much for my two hundred. And the sweeper—poor old chap—his dream had indeed brought him to grief. It had come to pass right enough, but he had woke up too soon—he ought to have dreamt about the objection. What was he to do? Well, he had my fiver, and though they were getting scarce I did not grudge it him.

As I left the inclosure I saw a crowd of people round a man who had fallen down. Some one, who looked like a doctor, told them to keep away, and give the man air. I came up, and recognized the fallen man. It was the sweeper. He probably had been one of the last men on the heath to hear about the objection.

When he had finished his dinner he had walked back to the side of the course, smoking his short black pipe, and thinking of the good time he would have. Then he had heard of the objection, and learnt that his dream had been a will-o'-the-wisp, which had led him to utter ruin. There must have been always something wrong with him, for the bad news had been too much for him, and he had fallen down in a fit or something. The doctor looked at him, felt at his pulse and then at his heart, looked grave, and said, "He is dead." As I looked down at him. I noticed that his pockets had been turned inside out. Some one had already secured the change of my fiver, and he lay on Newmarket Heath dead and cleaned out.

D. BELGRAVE.

TO E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DIARY OF A PLAIN GIRL."

THE mountains in fantastic lines
Sweep, blue-white, to the sky, which shines.
Blue as blue gems; athwart the pines
The lake gleams blue.

We three were here, three years gone by;
Our poet, with fine-frenzied eye,
You, steeped in learned lore, and I
A poet too.

Our Poet brought us books and flowers,
He read us "Faust;" he talked for hours
Philosophy (sad Schopenhauer's),
Beneath the trees:

And do you mind that sunny day,
When he, as on the sward he lay,
Told of Lassalle who bore away
The false Louise?

Thrice-favoured bard! to him alone
That green and snug retreat was shown,
Where, to the vulgar herd unknown,
Our pens we plied.

(For, in those distant days, it seems,
We cherished sundry idle dreams,
And with our flowing foolscap reams
The Fates defied.)

And after, when the day was gone,
And the hushed, silver night came on,
He showed us where the glow-worm shone;—
We stooped to see.

There, too, by yonder moon we swore
Platonic friendship o'er and o'er;
No folk, we deemed, had been before
So wise and free!

* * * *

And do I sigh or smile to-day?
Dead love or dead ambition, say,
Which mourn we most? Not much we weigh
Platonic friends.

On you the sun is shining free;
Our Poet sleeps in Italy,
Beneath the alien sod; on me
The cloud descends.

AT THE FOOT OF THE MATTERHORN.

AT different times various localities on the Continent seem by popular consent to become favourite resorts. Last year the tide rolled towards Zermatt. The Crown Prince and Princess of Germany, the Archbishop of Canterbury—besides many hundreds of tourists enjoying less celebrity—made their way to the foot of the Matterhorn.

"I liked——immensely," a gentleman once said to me after returning from his annual holiday; and when asked as to what were its particular attractions, he replied promptly, "Because it was so easy to get away from."

This cannot be said of Zermatt. To be taken ill at Zermatt means being obliged to remain there till you are well,—or well enough to bear being carried down to Visp. The railway comes to Visp, and it is from there the journey to Zermatt is generally made. Even at Lausanne we were told there was a carriage road all the way from Visp to Zermatt, but this was a mistake. There ought to be a carriage road, and a fairly good one might easily be made, but the natives won't permit it, as another canton would then share the profits of the summer harvest, and the porters, guides, and muleteers be thrown out of work.

From Visp, as far as St. Nicholas, there are three modes of progression open to the traveller—either to walk, to ride on a mule, or be carried in a *chaise à porteur*. The first is, of course, the best and most independent way, but every one can't take long walks up steep ascents, and may yet desire to see beautiful scenery, so they have to ride or be carried. This last is undoubtedly an expensive amusement. To take you over the ten miles between Visp and St. Nicholas you have to hire four or six men to each chair, at six francs a head, with a compulsory extra franc per man as a *pourboire*, whilst anything beyond you may feel inclined to give is left to your generosity. The porters hardly ever understand either French or English, so, however much you may desire to do so, you are completely cut off from the possibility of saying anything to them, as they only understand a *patois* German. A mule or horse to ride costs twelve francs, a baggage mule twelve francs, a porter six; so it is easy to be seen that a large family going up to Zermatt—provided they don't walk—leave a good deal of money on the road. The hotel-keepers find the porters, mules, horses, &c., and get a considerable

percentage out of the profits. One porter, who carried the small baggage, said that only one franc out of the six came to him; and when asked why he did not stand out for a better arrangement, or make one on his own account, replied, in that case he would not be allowed to hang about the hotels, and so would get no work at all given him to do.

Stalden is the first halt after leaving Visp, on the way to Zermatt. There is nothing remarkable about Stalden, except that it has a very steep mule path up to it and for some way above it. I believe the hotel enjoys a reputation for damp sheets. One can only wonder there are ever any other than damp sheets in the remote villages of Switzerland, should the season not happen to be a particularly dry one. There is no means of airing linen except in the sun, the fires being all of wood logs, so unless the stock is unparalleled in quantity, or that the sheets are only re-folded and not re-washed for the use of every fresh traveller, the obvious deduction is they must always have just come out of the wash-tub.

"I hope the sheets are aired," I once said to an obliging chamber-maid of the sterner sex, and he assured me, with effusion, I might be quite easy, as they had been out of doors all day, and a fine air blew through the rooms after the beds were made. Since that I have naturally taken them on trust.

Some people, when they travel, carry their own sheets, towels, and even pillows and pillow-cases; but these fastidious persons would do well to remain at home. Luggage is the *bête noire* of all tourists, and is constantly being left behind as too heavy and expensive to drag about,—hand-bags and parcels being substituted, containing only what is absolutely necessary. The really independent way to travel in Switzerland is to carry only a light portmanteau. This goes in the carriage with you on all the railways. There is no delay, no registering of baggage, and no extra expense.

To be burdened by house linen, added to the ordinary wardrobe, would make a toil of a pleasure—I mean, of course, for the ordinary tourist, who has no courier, valet, or lady's maid. Travelling must always entail a certain degree of risk, against which it is impossible to arm yourself; so if you ever mean to leave home, it is the wisest way not to think of it. I have lately heard of several big hotels in Paris where the beds which had already been slept in were first sprinkled with water from a watering-can, after which a warming-pan was passed lightly over the sheets just to give them that air of smooth freshness so delightful to the tired traveller. With increased appreciation do we bow to that time-honoured old proverb—"that where ignorance is bliss, &c."

After Stalden, the next halt on the road to Zermatt is St. Nicholas. Here you dismiss the mules, horses, porters—indeed,

the whole staff—and hire a carriage for the remainder of the journey. I don't know if it is fair to coach-builders to call the vehicle a carriage; anyhow it's a conveyance, though of a miserably uncomfortable description—a hooded one-horse chaise, with no springs worth mentioning, and no room for your knees, so that you are more comfortable if you sit sideways. The road is only a little better than the mule-path, and has great ruts and hollows, into which you are plunged, and out of which you are jolted in a manner no decent carriage could stand. By the time you arrive at Zermatt all your bones ache. The magnificence of the scenery has been quite lost upon you. Even the first view of the Matterhorn inspires no enthusiasm. Your only desire is to reach the hotel, after nine hours' hard travelling over a distance of not much more than twenty-two miles.

Zermatt lies at the foot of the Matterhorn, five thousand three hundred and fifteen feet above sea-level, and yet it stands in a valley. There are forests all around it, or rather pine-clad slopes. Lofty mountain peaks rise tier above tier, crowned by the huge rock-pyramid of the stupendous Matterhorn, and the Théodule glacier seems actually to reach down into the village. From Zermatt the ascent is made to the Riffelberg and Gornergrat, from which latter point a splendid view may be obtained of snow-peaks and glaciers—of Mont Rosa, the Rothhorn, the Weisshorn. At the foot of the Riffelberg winds the immense Gorner glacier.

Except, of course, during the tourist season, no more desolate region can well be imagined than Zermatt, lying as it does in the very heart of the Alps. The season begins in June and ends in September. The hotels are then closed for the winter, and a depth of snow two yards high blocks the village street, completely covering up the lower windows. Except in the towns, Switzerland literally hibernates for the winter months. The food and fuel have been stored up during the summer, and it must be mere existence, not life, these poor peasants suffer out. The cattle are brought down from the heights and have to be looked after and fed, and carving in wood helps the guides to earn sufficient money for their limited wants.

They are a healthy people, these Swiss mountaineers, and, except in the valleys, fever is almost unknown. A young girl carrying a portmanteau on her back will cheerfully tramp with it over the mountains for a distance of ten miles, only resting now and again by the roadside. The young women of Switzerland are fresh and comely, but an old Swiss woman, with her yellow parchment-like skin, mapped out, through exposure to all weathers, by hundreds of deep dark lines, and having the addition of a huge goitre hanging half way down her chest, is a sight to shudder at. A Swiss woman is evidently regarded by her husband as a beast of burden, and the result is premature old age.

Idiots and people suffering from goitre are numerous in Swit-

zerland—the latter said to be owing to drinking snow water, the former to constant intermarriage. They are not, however, above making a market out of their calamities. Stopping once in a public *diligence* at a small town between Chamounix and Geneva, the street was literally lined by horrible objects picturesquely grouped so as to attract attention and obtain pity. Women with enormous goitres held up big-headed idiots in their arms—creatures who made hideous and inhuman noises that reminded you of a menagerie. Nearly every one threw them money,—not so much for charity as to prevent their nearer approach.

Mr. Seiler is the great man of Zermatt. He owns the three hotels, Mont Rosa—his original venture—Mont Cervin, and the Zermatt. Half way up the Riffel he has another hotel, and on the heights yet another—the Riffelberg. He is like the Marquis of Carabas, he owns everything. In the early days of the world he would have been a chief or a king, so great is his talent for organization. Report says he clears ten thousand a year by these five hotels, but I don't suppose any one but Mr. Seiler knows the truth. He has his own cattle, and imports his own food. The food at a Swiss mountain hotel does not provoke the appetite, but the air is supposed to feed you, and no doubt the hotel manager takes this into consideration. The ordinary *table d'hôte* breakfast is the same all over Switzerland—tea, coffee, or chocolate, bread and butter, and honey. The honey is not the genuine product of the bees, but a manufactured article made principally from pear juice, and sold by the barrel. It is a clear, gum-like substance, and many people appreciate it.

The getting provisions up to the mountain heights is not an easy affair, since everything has to be carried, or brought on the backs of mules—indeed, the wonder is how so many people can procure enough to eat. Though the food may not be very tempting it is fairly wholesome; and if it were better, the tourist would lose the privilege of grumbling at it, and every one knows how dear that privilege is. He grumbles at the wet table napkins, at the delays between the courses, at the German opposite who will swallow his knife every time he puts food into his mouth, and because this suicidal propensity on the part of that nation obliges the Swiss hotel-keeper to have his cutlery so blunted that no one can cut anything. He grumbles at his fellow-travellers, at the weather, and declares, at least twenty times a day, that he wishes himself back in his own comfortable home.

"I don't think much of your Mount Blank—nor of your glaziers," an American once said to me at Chamounix, "and I shall be tarnation glad to put my feet back on my own doorstep," but no doubt he went right around again next year.

Retrospective travelling is, however, a great pleasure when a man tramps in imagination over the mountains, sitting comfortably by his fireside. The discomforts are forgotten, only the pleasant

memories remain, the *éclat* of having been. The air of Switzerland renews the health, it has a wonderful effect on the overtired brain. There is no tonic like it, especially for business and professional men.

In the year 1884 the cholera scare spoilt the Swiss season; but in 1885 almost every hotel in the high Alps was crowded, and at Zermatt the Seiler family had to fit up sleeping rooms over the stables, in the sitting or billiard rooms,—anywhere so as not to send the tired traveller back to St. Nicholas.

Zermatt is, perhaps, a little disappointing for those who do not venture further than Zermatt itself. It is essentially a centre for mountain climbing, and regarded from this standpoint possesses every advantage. When the weather is fine and the atmosphere clear, a magnificent view of the Matterhorn may be had, and the valley looking towards St. Nicholas, with the river Visp winding through it, is bold and picturesque; but you are confined and shut in on all sides, and there are no walks except across the meadows or by the river side. The village offers few attractions, and one hardly realizes the population is placed at 492 souls, but doubtless this includes the valley. There is a post office at Zermatt, a telegraph office, and a few tiny shops, all evidently opened for the convenience of the tourists. In these shops you can buy a miscellaneous collection of things, including coloured spectacles for the snow heights, green veils, tins for holding wild flowers, stray editions of Tauchnitz novels, photographs, cards with *edelweiss* mounted on them, and huge bundles of alpenstocks. No less than three shoemakers seem to drive a flourishing trade.

Hanging about the rough, uneven lane, which does duty for the street, or sitting idly on the wall, there are usually groups of men waiting to be hired. The guides may be known by their picturesque wide-brimmed felt hats, having an eagle's feather in them, by their leather gaiters, strong nailed boots, and by the coils of rope over their arms, and the ice axes in their hands.

Up and down the street are perpetually passing and repassing long processions of tourists going to or returning from the Riffel Alp and Riffelberg hotels. Sitting outside the Hotel Mont Rosa one can be well amused, even by watching a mule being loaded. It is quite wonderful what burdens a mule can carry. The wooden saddle is balanced by a portmanteau on either side, a huge trunk crowns the top, held there by ropes tightly secured, whilst the interstices are cleverly filled in with bundles of rugs, small bags, waterproofs, and umbrellas. When, at last, the mule gets under weigh, nothing is to be seen of him but his head, the end of his tail, and four thin legs. The action of a mule is unpleasant and very trying to many riders; but they are immensely strong, and far more sure-footed than a horse, picking their way over the rough stones with all the care and caution of a cat.

The most dreary experience of Zermatt is, of course, on a wet

day. Hotels high up in the mountains are not made to live in, but only to sleep in. On a really hopelessly wet day a number of people, in the absence of any chance of securing the only two arm-chairs in the *salon*, retire to their own rooms and turn their beds into temporary sofas. There is a rush to secure a book to read out of the hotel library,—a heterogeneous collection of works in French, English, and German, left behind by previous tourists. The first volume is invariably missing—no one ever finds the first volume of any book. The papers are of ancient date, the piano out of tune.

A few enterprising spirits hang about the road in mackintoshes and take a stroll by the river under umbrellas. Returning to the shelter of the hotel they leave little streams of water on the doorstep, as they stand there gazing up into the clouds in the direction where the Matterhorn is known to be, though hidden from them by a pall of steamy white vapour. Men have a better chance of passing their time agreeably than the ladies, for whilst the latter have only the poor consolation of writing letters in the privacy of their own rooms, or making a cup of tea over a travelling Etna, the men crowd into the general smoking room, and enveloped by thick fumes of tobacco, tell racy stories, or vaunt of personal experiences in difficult mountaineering. It may be as well to mention that no one believes in these experiences, though every one listens to them.

Sometimes, after a day of enforced idleness, when a good deal of superfluous energy has to be got rid of, dancing in the evening is proposed. No room is better fitted for this pastime than the big uncarpeted *salon* of a Swiss hotel. The chairs and tables are quickly run into corners, and provided any one can be found who remembers some dance music, and is willing to be made useful, the couples are quickly in motion, little ceremonies about introduction being dispensed with.

Sometimes a really good singer delights his audience. There was such a one at the Mont Cervin hotel last year, a man who had a splendid tenor voice. There was also a young man who sang comic songs, and a young lady, without a voice, who would insist on favouring the company.

Incongruity of dress is a strange feature of mountain travelling. The women who mean business wear short serge costumes, felt hats, and flat shoes, whilst an alpenstock seems to be so much a part of them, that one can hardly imagine them laying it aside even when they go to bed. Lace dresses and dainty toilettes suitable for Rotten Row are not uncommon. Some women evidently like to travel prepared for every emergency, and are always followed about by a huge trunk, with probably a ball-dress in it.

There is a little church at Zermatt, where a chaplain during the tourist season holds the Sunday services. It stands on the slope of a hill, in a churchyard where a few tombstones are erected

to the strangers who have perished among the mountains. The Catholic burying-ground is a very interesting spot to visit, having within its precincts the remains of Mr. Hudson, Mr. Hadow, and the well-known guide, Michel Croz.

In the year 1865, the first ascent of the Matterhorn was accomplished. Eight men started from Zermatt on the 13th of July, at half-past six in the morning, Lord Francis Douglas, Mr. Hadow, Mr. Hudson, Mr. Whymper, Michel Croz the guide, also Peter Taugwalder, another guide, and his two sons, one of whom returned to Zermatt on the following day, his services not being required.

The ascent of the Matterhorn was achieved with safety, but in descending, the rope that bound the little party together broke, and Hadow, Hudson, Lord Francis Douglas, together with the guide Michel Croz, fell from precipice to precipice on to the Matterhorn glacier, a distance of nearly 4,000 feet, and were killed on the spot.

Down in Zermatt a report was brought to the Hotel Mont Rosa that an avalanche had fallen. It was the flying bodies of the unfortunate men who perished.

The remains of Mr. Hudson, Mr. Hadow, and Michael Croz were discovered, and finally, by order of the Government, brought down to Zermatt, twenty men being especially employed for the purpose. The body of Lord Francis Douglas was never found. Maybe it is still preserved wrapped in a mantle of snow and ice, and truly has it been written of him, that no man ever before had such a tombstone as his,—a monument a mile high, standing on a gigantic pedestal.

Mr. Whymper, Peter Taugwalder, and his son, the three whose lives were saved, came down from the Matterhorn to Zermatt on the day following the accident, and at the time, Mr. Whymper wrote an account of the tragedy in the visitors' book at the Mont Rosa hotel. That interesting leaf was afterwards torn out and carried away, by the ruthless hand of some unprincipled tourist. Since then, the book with another brief account has always been kept by Mr. Seiler, under lock and key; but that the original should have been stolen is much to be deplored.

A granite obelisk has been erected to the memory of Michel Croz. Three other monuments lie side by side on the north side of the Catholic church, one has Mr. Hadow's name on it, another Mr. Hudson's, and the third is sacred to the memory of a Mr. Grote, a Russian traveller, who lost his life in 1859, by falling into a crevasse of the Findelen glacier.

Lord Francis Douglas and Mr. Hadow were only nineteen years of age.

Tiny mounds of earth, the length of a child's coffin, are allotted to the poor in the Catholic churchyard at Zermatt; most of these have a cross in marigolds planted down the centre,

and at the head is placed a stained black wooden cross, a name, or often only initials, being rudely scratched upon it, apparently with a nail or knife. In Switzerland the time allowed for a body to remain peacefully interred is short. They do not bury their dead one on the top of the other, but at every funeral some body has to be removed to make room for a new occupant. The bones are put into a charnel-house, or cellar, and the skulls ranged round the walls of a small chapel. Sometimes, when the skeletons are taken out of the ground, the flesh has scarcely fallen from the bones. Once at Andermatt I saw a body being thrown out by the grave-digger, and the thigh and knee-bones were still adhering.

A good many men living in mountain regions meet their death through falls, but no such tragedy has ever been recorded as the death of those four out of the seven adventurous Alpine climbers who achieved the first ascent of the Matterhorn. Up to the year 1865, the Matterhorn had not only been looked upon as inaccessible, but as being a haunted mountain, and possibly the abode of the spirits of the dead. The poor in most of the mountain villages are very ignorant, and, as a natural consequence, immensely superstitious. If the sacrifice of the explorers' lives did nothing more, it certainly broke a spell which can never exist again.

Many ascents of the Matterhorn have been made since that first fatal experience, and the mountain is no longer considered inaccessible. Dangerous points of rock have been blasted, and in some parts chains are put, though many of these have been swept away by thunderstorms.

More people, especially the young and strong, would doubtless ascend mountains than now do so, were they not deterred—not by the danger—but by the expense. A rich man can afford to climb Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn, but a poor man naturally hesitates before spending fifteen or twenty pounds to get a better view from looking down a mountain than he does by looking up.

Last year, during the ten days I spent at Zermatt, no fewer than four serious accidents happened. Mr. Seiler improvised a stretcher out of a folding iron bedstead, and laid a mattress on it, which was covered by a thick rug. That stretcher seemed to be constantly in requisition. Two young men crossing the Gorner glacier were the first to need it, one of them having his ankle badly crushed. A lady staying at the Mont Rosa hotel fell off her mule, and for some days her life hung in the balance, as erysipelas in the head intervened. Another lady, staying at the Mont Cervin hotel, lost her maid, who had been desired by her mistress, with whom she had been walking, to go straight back to Zermatt by the path leading from the Riffel. She strayed from it to gather wild flowers, fell over a precipice, and remained undiscovered for four hours, lying in great agony with a broken hip

and a fractured skull. She was brought down to the hotel on the stretcher, and, after being kept there a week, was put into a plaster jacket and carried all the way down to Visp. At Visp she was put into an invalid carriage and conveyed by rail to the hospital at Lausanne.

The last accident was fatal. A Mr. D——s and his friend were walking up the Riffel, when Mr. D——s turned aside to climb a rock. It presented no great difficulties, and there was no apparent danger; but either a piece of the rock gave way, or his foot slipped, for he fell and was hideously crushed to death.

The dangers of Alpine climbing are hardly sufficiently understood, and can certainly *never* be over-estimated. The foolhardy will always hold their lives in their hands, if they attempt to wander without a guide among the high mountains of Switzerland.

C. M. HAWKSFORD.

SONNET.

THE FIRST DAY OF SPRING.

As that fair princess in the old romance
Who lay in changeless calm of charmed sleep
Was thrilled to joyous life and passion deep
By one warm kiss which woke her from her trance,
She blushing purely 'neath the prince's glance,
Whose love-lit eyes her own enthralled keep
Till to their depths must answering rapture leap,
And tender glowing smiles her charms enhance;
Even so to-day, when first the spell-bound earth,
The conquering sun did greet, her pulses stirred.
Within, the folded grasses strove for birth,
While subtle fragrance rose and song of bird—
And in the heart of man a holy sense
Of purer hope, delight, and innocence!

I. J. LEMON.

THE IRISH HARP.

"The harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled."

MOORE.

A VISIT, while in Dublin, to St. Patrick's Cathedral and Trinity College suggested this sketch. In the one is a marble slab erected by Lady Morgan to the memory of Carolan, the Irish harper; in the other a beautiful specimen of an old Irish harp is preserved. The intervening years between that harper's death and the pretended origin of that harp form the Augustan era of Irish minstrelsy. Prior to that epoch the history of the Irish harp is "lost in the twilight of fable;" subsequent to it, it gradually becomes extinct.

The earliest reference I could find to the harp in Ireland is a description of the Teach Mid Chuarta, or Hall of Tara, written, according to Petrie, probably in the sixth century, and alluding to a custom of the third by which places were set apart in the hall for the Cruitire, or harpers. The author of a poem in A.D. 594, on the death of Colomba, mentions the harp as accompanying his song; and later still a harp was found represented on an old sculptured cross in Ullard church, Co. Kilkenny, which from its style and worn condition is apparently anterior to A.D. 830, the date assigned to the famous cross of Monasterboyce. It is observable that there are only seven strings in the Ullard harp, and that it has no fore-pillar "the first specimen," says Fergusson (in Bunting's "Irish Music") "of the harp without a fore-pillar that has hitherto been discovered out of Egypt;" adding that this circumstance justifies "the startling presumption that the Irish have had the harp originally out of Egypt." The inference is noteworthy though not absolutely conclusive. Indeed, an equally cogent argument might be deduced in favour of its Thracian origin, from the fact that a quadrangular harp with two strings appears on an ornamental cover or "theca" of an Irish MS. of the eleventh century in the Duke of Buckingham's library (in 1840) at Stowe, and a similar one having since been traced on a monument at Petan, in Styria. The monument was erected during the reign of the Emperor Aurelius, and Orpheus is shown on it performing on an instrument bearing a great resemblance

to that on the Irish "theca." There can be no two opinions about the antiquity of the Irish harp, but those regarding its origin are necessarily hazy. A writer of the reign of Henry II. informs us that the Irish harpers taught their beloved art in secret, but this evidently did not prevent the accomplished Cambrensis, who followed in that monarch's train, from sharing in and appreciating its excellences. That he was surprised and delighted at what he heard is clear from the following brief excerpt from his Itinerary :

"In musicis instrumentis, commendabilem invenio istius gentis diligentiam; in quibus, præ omni natione quam vidimus, incomparabiliter est instructa. Non enim in his, sicut in Britannicis (quibus assueti sumus) instrumentis, tarda et morosa est modulatio; verum velox et præceps, suavis tamen et jucunda sonoritas."

There is some evidence (Walker's "Irish Bards") of the existence, in 1340, of a school of harpers under the direction of a renowned harper named O'Carrol; and a decade later a harp was rudely but accurately engraved on the beautiful "Fiachal Phodring," or reliquary, in which St. Patrick's tooth is said to have been preserved. Petrie says thirty strings are visible in the engraving, which fact would go far to prove that that number was in use in Ireland before 1350. The same author also assigns to this period the origin of the harp referred to above, commonly but erroneously known as Brian Boru's harp, and preserved in the museum of Trinity College, Dublin. Petrie's able and scholarly refutation of O'Gorman's theory lays for ever at rest all doubts as to the origin of this venerable relic. "The harp," he writes, "popularly known as the harp of Brian Boru, is not only the most ancient instrument of the kind known to exist in Ireland, but is, in all probability, the oldest harp now remaining in Europe. Still, however, it is very far from being of the remote age to which it is popularly supposed to belong; and the legendary story on which this supposition is grounded, and which has been fabricated to raise its antiquity and increase its historical interest, is but a clumsy forgery, which will not bear for a moment the test of critical antiquarian examination." Applying this "test" himself, Petrie discovered that the arms on it are not those of the O'Brien, but of the O'Neill sept, that from its size (32 inches) and other signs it was evidently a Ceirnín, or religious harp, and that it belonged in all likelihood to one of two O'Neills in the fourteenth century, bishops respectively of Clogher and Derry. This remarkable harp is of exquisite workmanship. The upright pillar is of oak, the sounding-board of yellow sawn, the extremity of the forearm is capped with silver, and the thirty string-holes (not twenty-eight, as Vallancy inaccurately asserts) are neatly ornamented with carved brass. The four sounding-holes were once (as is supposed) adorned with silver, removed presumably by the fingers of time, or a thief; the foot-piece, or rest, has also

disappeared, and the parts of the harp to which it was joined show considerable signs of decay. Walker gives a capital delineation of this national treasure in his work (*ubi supra*), and states that it was presented by his friend Mr. Ousley, of Limerick, to the Right Hon. W. Conyngham, "who, in the year 1782, generously deposited it in the museum of Trinity College, Dublin." It is a curious fact that twenty-two years previously it was played on in the streets of the "City of the Violated Treaty" by one of the family for whom it was originally made—the famous harper, Arthur O'Neill. Irish patriots may often echo Lover's pathetic words:

"Oh! give me one strain
Of that wild harp again,
In melody proudly its own;
Sweet harp of the days that are gone,"

but no bard has since wakened its slumbering music.

The Irish possessed four kinds of harps: the Clarsech, or common harp; the Ceirnin, or small religious harp; the Ciunard Cruit, or high-headed harp; and the Crom Cruit, or down-bending harp. The first was that used by the bards and harpers, and is the Irish harp properly so called; the second, more exclusively clerical, probably accompanied Druidical as later Christian hymns. "Perhaps," says Walker (*ut supra*), "this instrument was sacred to Karneios, or Apollo (whence *Granneus*, an Irish name for our favourite Deity), and borne by the dancers at the Kearnaire, or sacrifice to that Diety. (Vallancey, 'Collect. de rebus Hib.'). In Arabic, *Keren* implies the rays of the sun, with which the poet tells us Apollo's lute was always strung." The Ciunard Cruit and Crom Cruit, though styled harps, were more strictly of the violin and guitar types; indeed, they may be considered the parents of those instruments. The former had ten strings and was played on with a plectrum, or bow; the latter possessed six strings two of which were touched with the thumb. Bunting (*loc. cit.*) adds two other harps to the four given by Walker and commonly referred to: the Craiftin's Cruit, a name derived from an Irish legendary hero, and the Lub, a poetical name of the harp. Mr. William Beauford, in a letter to Mr. Walker (April, 1786), gives an erroneous division of the Irish harps arising from a misconception of a passage of Brompton's, for which Moore (Preface to "Irish Melodies") thus takes him up sharply: "A singular oversight occurs in an essay on the Irish harp by Mr. Beauford, which is inserted in the appendix to Walker's 'Historical Memoirs.' 'The Irish,' says he, 'according to Brompton, in the reign of Henry II., had two kinds of harps, "Hibernici tamen in duobus musici generis instrumentis, quamvis præcipitem et velocem, suavem tamen et jucundam," the one greatly bold and quick, the other soft and pleasing.' How a man of Mr. Beauford's learning could so mistake the meaning and mutilate the grammatical construction of this

extract is unaccountable. The following is the passage as I find it entire in Brompton, and it requires but little Latin to perceive the injustice which has been done to the words of the old chronicler: 'Et cum Scotia, hujus terræ filia, utatur lyrâ, tympano et choro, ac Walliâ citharâ, tubis et chorâ Hibernici, tamen in duobus musici generis instrumentis, *quamvis præcipitem et velocem, suavem tamen et jucundam*, crispatis modulis et intricatis notulis, efficiunt harmoniam.' ("Hist. Anglic. Scrip.") Beauford is right in saying, as he does farther on, that the "two kinds of harps" were the "small and large harp" (the Clarsech and Ceirnín), in general use amongst the Irish; but he is wrong in limiting the number to two, and in his rendering of Brompton's passage. With reference to the change in the form of the Irish harp the same writer remarks somewhat more accurately: "As the science of music advanced among the European nations, the harp changed its form. Its original figure was, most probably, like the harp of the Phrygians—a right-angled, plain triangle; but as this form was not capable of receiving, with convenience, a number of strings, it was found more proper to alter the right angle to an oblique one, and to give a curvature to the arm. The Irish bards in particular seem, from experience derived from practice, to have discovered the true musical figure of the harp, a form which will, on examination, be found to have been constructed on true harmonic principles.

In the fifteenth century Robert Nugent, a Jesuit, made some useful improvements in the Irish harp, closing both the open space between the trunk and arm, and right sound-hole, and adding another row of strings; by which arrangement the treble could be played with the right hand and the bass with the left, which was also a new departure, since Irish harpers, like their brethren of Wales, were accustomed to the opposite method. But those additions, ingenious though they undoubtedly were, found scant favour, the old form of the harp being preferred to that which such innovations gave it. The influence exercised by Irish harpers at home and abroad is worthy of a passing notice. Each Irish chieftain kept a harp or harper in his castle, whose extemporaneous effusions while his fingers swept the strings spurred his lord on to valorous deeds or filled him with a dread of retribution as the occasion required. This influence apparently excited the jealous attention of the Virgin Queen, for in 1563 she caused an Act of Parliament to be passed against the Irish bards and their entertainers. The incident is thus alluded to by Mr. Preston in his "Verses written in the Dargle, Co. Wicklow."

"Here in old heroic times
The minstrel wak'd his lofty rhymes;
He tuned the harp, he bade them flow,
Attender'd to the streams below.
When England would a land enthral,

She doom'd the Muse's sons to fall,
Lest Virtue's hand should string the lyre,
And feed with song the patriot's fire."

Three years subsequent to Elizabeth's enactment the Rev. John Good, in his "Description of the Manners and Customs of the Wild Irish," wrote: "They love music mightily, and of all instruments are particularly taken with the harp, which being strung up with brass wire, and beaten with crooked nails, is very melodious;" one proof amongst many of the futility of the Act. The Irish harp was to die a natural not a violent death. "The great Irish families," says Walker, "in the last century" (the seventeenth) "entertained in their houses harpers, who were the depositaries of their best pieces of music." Long, however, before Ireland's national instrument hung "mute on Tara's walls" its fame reached other lands. In 1100 the Welsh had their musical canon regulated by Irish harpers; besides, there are not wanting grounds for supposing that Cambria owes the harp to Erin. Walker writes thus on the last point: "Caradoc (Wynne's 'History of Wales') affirms that the Welsh had their instrument from the Irish. This some writers will not admit, because the Welsh do not, like the Irish, string their harp with brass chords. But the Welsh harp has not always been strung with gut. It appears from the first 'Book of the Introduction of Knowledge,' published by Borde, a Welsh poet, A.D. 1542, that the Welsh harp at that period was strung with horse-hair.

"For my harp is made of a good mare's skyn,
The strynge be of horse-heare, it maketh a good dyn."

Now it is very probable that the first innovation which the Welsh made in the stringing of the harp, on their receiving it from this country, was the substituting hair for wire. But Vallancey brings an argument in support of Caradoc's assertion that must bear down every rising doubt. 'The Irish Teadhloin, pronounced Tealoin or Telin, is certainly the etymon of the Welsh Teylin, a harp—a word I can find no derivation of in that language; and I think proves from whence they borrowed both the instrument and its name.' " ("Collect de rebus Hib.")

As in Wales, so in Scotland and England, the Irish harp and harpers were renowned. Neither country ever cultivated the harp to any extent: they were content to hear its strains awakened by Irish fingers. Buchanan states that Ethodius, the twenty-fifth Scottish monarch, kept an Irish harper in his palace; Rory Dall O'Cahan passing into Scotland delighted the ears of her James and his court by his brilliant execution (this O'Cahan is mentioned by Scott in his "Legend of Montrose" as the teacher of Annot Lyle, and "the most famous harper of the Western Highlands"); Denis Hempson played before the Pretender in Edinburgh; and

Echlin O'Kane (alluded to by Boswell in his "Tour in the Hebrides"), after exhibiting his skill in Italy, France, and Spain, resided for years in Scotland prior to his death, and was well known chiefly about Blair-Athol and Dunkeld. In English, as in Scottish halls and leafy glens, have Irish bards discoursed sweet music to appreciative ears. "No harpe," wrote Bacon, "hath the sound so melting and so prolonged as the Irish harpe;" and the Duke of Newcastle frequented with other notabilities (*circa* 1730) the house of a certain Maguire near Charing Cross, London, attracted by his skilful manipulation of the harp. Beneath the blue skies of Italy, too, the Irish harp found a welcome and a home more than once. Galilei, a Tuscan author of the sixteenth century, alluding to it, wrote: "This most ancient instrument was brought to us from Ireland, as Dante says (born 1265), where they are excellently made and in great numbers, the inhabitants of that island having practised on it for many ages." The same could doubtless be said by half a dozen other European nations.

In 1738 the death-throes of the Irish harp began, for in the March of that year Turlough O'Carolan expired, whose genius had revived its ancient glories for half a century. Others followed him who shed a bright lustre upon it, but it was the after-glow of the sun that had set.

"The last of all the bards was he."

Undisputed prince of Irish harpers, Carolan, unlike many, obtained a niche in the temple of fame, while his harp and his songs were entrancing his people. Posterity has ratified the verdict. Two only of his successors have approached him within anything like measurable distance—Denis Hempson and Arthur O'Neill. The latter achieved much fame, but was acknowledged to be inferior to the former in execution. Hempson attained the great age of one hundred and twelve years; his harp is preserved in a baronet's family at Downhill. Vigorous efforts were made at the close of the last century and beginning of this, to rekindle the expiring flame of national interest in the harp, but with little success. In the *Dublin Evening Post* of July, 1784, the following advertisement appeared, which was also reinserted in July, 1785:

IRISH HARP.

To encourage the national music of Ireland, the following prizes will be given at Granard, on Monday, the 1st of August next, to performers on the Irish harp, under the decision of judges to be appointed by the company then present.

Seven guineas	to the best performer.
Five "	to the second.
Three "	to the third.
Two "	to the fourth.

A meeting was subsequently held, of which Walker says: "The contest was held at the appointed time. The company was large

and brilliant ; but the performers were only *mediocres*, and the music common and ill-selected." Bunting gives an account of a similar contest, but with better results, which was held in the Exchange, Belfast, in 1792. Hempson and O'Neill were present with eight others. O'Neill carried off the first prize of ten guineas, and Ch. Fanning the second of eight guineas. Six guineas were awarded to the rest of the performers. Hempson was evidently out of form through age, being then in his ninety-seventh year. An interesting incident occurred at the close of the contest, which Bunting narrates thus: "The Irish harpers were succeeded by a Welshman (Williams), whose execution was very great; the contrast between the sweet, expressive tones of the Irish instrument, and the bold, martial ones of the Welsh, had a pleasing effect as marking the difference of character between the two nations." It seems that the harps used by the foregoing representatives of the old race of Irish harpers were strung with thirty strings, and had a compass from C to D in alt., "comprising," as Fergusson remarks, "the tones included between the highest pitch of the female voice and the lowest of the male." An Irish harp society was formed in 1807, which came to a premature end six years later; a similar fate befell another in Dublin about the same period.

The Irish harp is now a thing of the past.

"Hush'd is the harp—the minstrel gone."

Both lie silent in a humble grave at Killronan, where Carolan sleeps, but the memory of their glories will always be fresh in the hearts of the Irish people.

J. B. S.

"BROKE."

By KNOBKERRY.

A TALE OF A SOUTH AFRICAN RACECOURSE.

CHAPTER I.

IN NATAL.

IT is a winter evening in August, year 1880. (This, reader, may seem peculiar, but it is a fact, for the scene of my tale is South Africa.)

The sun is fast sinking for the night, behind a range of hills, not far from Durban, the chief port of Natal.

A solitary horseman is seen wending his way along the narrow mountain path, leading to the camp of the cavalry regiment stationed at a small country village, about fourteen miles from the aforesaid town.

The rider's name is Douglas, who has just come out from the depôt to join his regiment on service. Douglas is a man of good family but scanty means; in fact, besides his pay he has but a very limited income to call his own, and is in that enviable position, which I hope may not be the reader's, a cavalry subaltern on his last legs.

Two years at home have exhausted the small amount of capital he commenced his career with, and now he finds himself landed in a foreign clime, practically an outcast, for he dare not return to England.

Tailors, bootmakers, saddlers, &c., and that noted firm of Kite Flyers, Spiretti, and Co. are lying in ambush for his body the moment he sets foot on the shores of his native land, and but yesterday a telegram arrived for the 22nd Hussars to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to Portsmouth *en route* to Sheffield.

But to return to our rider, who is smoking furiously, and gazing in front of him with an expression in his eyes which shows that his body may be present yet his thoughts far away.

He occasionally takes the Trichinopoly from his lips to shout (we will not say swear) at his trekker, who periodically seems to be in a humour to say his prayers, possibly in imitation of various Trappists from the monastery hard by, who are scattered about in

various attitudes of devotion, some in the centre of the sweet potato crops and others in the mealie fields.

But our hero heeds them not, for he is thinking of the county meeting to take place in the following week, and whether in one lucky coup he could clear off his debts and leave a small margin to start afresh.

Stewart, a captain in the regiment, is running a horse for the Natal stakes, distance two miles over hurdles, but the knotty point at present to be solved is whether Yellow Fog is a good thing; he is a Natal horse, and the supposed cracks have only just arrived from the Cape, and as yet have not had time to get over a tolerably rough passage in one of the small coasting steamers that ply between Capetown and Durban.

A violet glow steals over the hills, showing that darkness will soon take the place of daylight, for there is but little twilight out here, and with a new moon it is not pleasant riding amongst ant heaps and those bottomless pits caused by that voracious animal the ant bear.

Douglas puts his horse at a canter, soon passes the station, and keeps on at a smart pace up the dusty track that does duty as a road.

He soon arrives at the mess compound, gives over his horse to his servant, and strolls into the verandah, where five or six brother-officers are lounging about in various attitudes and attire, grumbling at the country and the people, and asking for the twentieth time or so how the time is to be passed till mess, a question hard to answer, for knocking the balls about on an indifferent table is neither edifying nor amusing.

Imbibing milk punch is at last resorted to as a break to the monotony, and then they gradually disperse, some to smoke and others to write English letters for the outgoing mail on the following day.

Douglas goes to his room, opens his despatch-box and takes out a packet, unmistakably bills, and notes the totals on a sheet of paper.

"To account rendered" seems the favourite item, and as he slowly adds to the pile of figures, already reaching to a very fair amount, his patience gives way, and gathering the offending documents up in a heap he thrusts them back into the writing-case, throws himself on his camp bed, lights his pipe, and bemoans his fate.

"What an unlucky devil I am!—always in debt! I see nothing for it now but an infantry regiment and India. I must write to Jull to-morrow. But fellows are not so keen to exchange now-days. There is that beastly transferring, and I do not suppose I would get more than four hundred in any case. No! I'll wait till the races are over, and see what luck I have there. A trump card may turn up, and there is no good doing anything I might

be sorry for afterwards. Let me see! This is Monday, and this day week is the eventful day."

The puffs of smoke curl gently upwards, and Douglas begins indulging in that pleasant but unstable occupation, building "castles in the air."

Have you ever tried it, reader?

As you go on building everything assumes a rosy hue, and at last one believes one's thoughts to be true. Vain mirage!

But there goes the dress trumpet!

A knock at the door is followed by a hussar with a pair of mess overalls and varnished boots in one hand, the inevitable order book in the other.

"Give me the orders, Smith. Thanks! Let me see, what's on to-morrow? Parade for cast horses at ten—Ah! Brown fined five shillings—silly young ape! Marsh granted ten days' leave—lucky sinner! Reid, orderly officer! Here you are, Smith! you need not wait; call me at the usual time."

The door closes, and Douglas proceeds to divest himself of his mufti and don his mess kit, lathering his chin at the glass.

"The deuce! I have cut myself! Shall never stop the bleeding in time! Late last night! A magnum if I am late again" (for with the chief being late for mess was considered tantamount to being late on parade). "Hi! Smith, run and ask Mr. Reid to lend me some of his pink court plaster; tell him I have mown half my face off. It is those beastly candles! I won't have any more of them, they give no light at all. You can get better ones I'm sure, if you try."

The plaster is procured, and the mess trumpet rings out just as Douglas buttons his waistcoat.

"Waiter! Bring me a sherry and bitters."

"What is the matter with you to-night, old snake? Why this excess? It is seldom you imbibe before dinner." The speaker is Tate, one of the senior captains.

"Why, that ride this afternoon gave me an awful thirst."

"Well, let us sit down, the chief has crossed out I see—in society I suppose."

They are soon seated, and then the hubbub of the mess table begins; harmless chaff flying about like shuttlecocks from a battledore.

"Where was Leslie going this afternoon? He was after petticoats, I know. How is she, old man? Must go and call on that pretty Kaffir next Sunday. Where are they?"

"I'll bet you two to one in fivers Yellow Fog falls."

"Hulloa! A magnum for Arbuthnot, the cloth is not off the table."

"We shall be able to buy the coach, and horse it too, if we go on at this rate."

So dinner proceeds, and at last the coffee and cigars are brought round.

"What shall we do now?"

"Let's have a cock fight! We can get that crowing devil in from the cook; about time he was out of mess."

"Won't do; let's have a wrestle."

This is agreed to, the tables being shoved on one side.

"Let Tate wrestle Reid."

"Bet you a drink Reid puts him down."

"Done with you!"

The two opponents take off their jackets, and spurs, and the fun commences.

"Wait for the grip!"

"He has it! No he hasn't! Ah! Put him on his back."

"Look at Tate's overalls!"

"There goes Reid's waistcoat up the seams."

"Ah! Tate's down."

"Where has Leslie gone?"

"Let's go and draw him!"

"No! The youngster is seedy—got a touch of fever, I think."

What babies! some will say. But, my friends, possibly you have never been tied down to a place where you are even glad to amuse yourself by prodding at flies with a fork, or some such equally exhilarating pastime.

Surely even this is better than the old, old days, when it was considered a gentlemanly and correct thing to turn oneself into a wine cellar, and men were tested by the number of bottles they could consume.

Intoxication has gone out of fashion in the service, and in the present day an inebriate would soon get a polite hint to quit.

Our friends soon disperse, and seek refuge in the arms of Morpheus.

CHAPTER II.

NEWS FROM HOME.

"COME in! What is it?"

"English mail in, sir; four letters for you."

"Thanks! What sort of morning is it?"

"Cold, sir."

"Ah, well, get me a hot tub, then."

"Let's have a look at these letters. Ah, Cobb! Can't wait any longer for that forty pounds. Will have to take legal proceedings. That is encouraging. Who is this from? Baxter thinks his last letter must have miscarried, calling attention to his small account for nine pounds ten."

"The scoundrel! Why, it is only six months since I paid him."

Ah, well! He can wait. What is this? A photo, by Jove! Bother the women! How did she know I was out here? Looks prettier than ever, though. Ah, Spiretti! The bill for two hundred is overdue, sorry he can't renew. A pretty kettle of fish! Where is it all to end? Many a man has cut his throat for less. But I must get up. Let me see, I have leave from stables, shall lunch at the club, and then go and see Yellow Fog do his hurdles. Smith! Tell Thomas to have the pony here at ten, I shall want him to go down to the station. I mean to catch the ten fifteen from the hill."

"Very good, sir. Do you want your bag?"

"No, I shall be back by the six-thirty; either you or Thomas can bring the pony down to meet it. What time is it now?"

"Half-past nine, sir."

"Well, tell Raikes to get me some fish, I will be down directly."

"Tea or coffee, sir?"

"Why do you bother? You know I always drink tea. I want some silver, and fill my cigar case—those new Trichis; not the cigars."

"Very good, sir."

Having settled his hunting tie to his liking, our hero strolls downstairs to the mess-room, which is only occupied by the orderly officer, for most of them are late birds, seldom showing up till after ten.

"Good morning, Reid."

"Good morning, Douglas! Where are you off to in that mashing kit?"

"Why! I have something to do in town; besides I want to see Stewart's horse."

"What, Yellow Fog? He will be nowhere—don't believe he can stay; besides that, hear he has an enlarged hock."

"Well, seeing is believing. He fancies the horse himself, and generally he is not far out."

"No! But, my dear fellow, the excitement of this lively place has turned his head—must have! He believes he has a good thing in that pony of his. Have you seen him?"

"No. What is he like?"

"A grey rat of a thing, ribs you could hang your hat on. Has entered him, too, for that flat race."

"What is the distance? Do you know?"

"Mile and a half, I believe."

"What does he call him?"

"Vesuvian! He is just over height. Rather a pity; for, joking apart, I think he might do something amongst ponies; has good clean legs, and seems to have a turn of speed, but I believe his bolt is shot at a mile."

"Oh, well, I must be off. Do anything for you?"

"No, thanks, old man. Ta ta."

Douglas canters off, for the mess clock does not always agree with the station time, and just as he reaches the hill the train steams in.

"Here is your ticket, sir!"

"Thanks!"

The train moves off—bang—rattle—one minute up, the next down, for the line seems to have been laid to take in every rise and fall that can be found, and must have proved a fortune to the contractor, if not to the company; now winding like a snake, now shooting round a corner with a rapidity that almost takes the breath away.

Our hero is seated in one corner, carrying on a mild flirtation, by means of his eyes, with a rather pretty girl seated opposite to him, whose mamma is studying the local paper quite unconscious of this by-play.

They both alight at the next station, making way for a crusty-looking old colonist, in a Terai hat, with green puggaree, who scowls at our friend as much as to say, "What the deuce are you doing here?"

By this time the sun is blazing away in full swing.

Numerous fires are visible, dotted about the veldt, the colonial way of getting rid of the tall grass; the young shoots soon forcing their way through the soil where this is done.

Here and there Kaffir kraals appear on the crests of the hills, and herds of oxen grazing in the valley, making rather a pretty picture.

Occasionally you pass gangs of coolies at work on the coffee and sugar plantations.

As you dart by the sprints you hear the frogs croaking, showing that rain is not far distant, and the crickets' chirp in the clefts of the rocks.

The crusty gentleman puts a handkerchief over his face, beginning to snore, Douglas falling into a reverie, till the scream of the engine announces another station, which turns out to be the terminus.

How different to an English terminus. Here are no hansoms plying for hire, nor busses rattling over the noisy stones, but a train drawn by a span of bony oxen, or a mule-team driven by a Kaffir with wondrous dexterity, a henchman standing behind the driver with a long bamboo whip, the crack of which sounds like a pistol, and wielded with a precision which would call forth the admiration of Ward, or the Four-in-hand Club.

Douglas turns into the barber's to have his hair cut, a proceeding which always takes place on coming to town, and then saunters into lunch.

"Let me see, what is the time? Half-past three. Well, I can be at the course by four," and taking up his stick and hat, he strolls up the dusty track leading from the club to the station,

about a mile distant, where he finds Stewart already mounted on Yellow Fog, the hock, as Reid had predicted, being puffed.

"Hulloa, Douglas! What brings you here? Come to see me have a spin! Eh? I am going to take him over the hurdles; for the Turf Club make no rule about it; rather different to England. What are you looking at? His hock? That will not stop him. The only thing I am frightened of is he will come down with me. Takes off such an awful distance from his fences. Frightfully jumpy work riding him, I can tell you. Newbolt is going to give Vesuvian a gallop by himself afterwards. I cannot wait. I think he is a certainty, for he is very fast at a mile, I know, and am nearly sure can stay the extra distance, although the man I bought him from never knew it, and thought him a mile horse only. You put your money on him, you can back him cheap."

"Well, but what about Yellow Fog?"

"My dear boy! Take my advice; back Vesuvian. I am not sure of the other, although I have a little money on him; but I must be moving. It's getting late, shall see you to-morrow."

"As Stewart says, he is an awkward fencer. Would not ride him for a fortune. Some of these days he will jump short and break his jockey's neck. He is certainly not a safe investment in any sense of the word. By Jove! he made his mark on that last hurdle. Rattled all four. Ah! he's pecked. Well saved, old man! Now to see the pony."

Vesuvian is led out, and Newbolt soon chucked into the saddle.

He is not a bad-looking little horse, although weedy, and regular work and good feeding are already beginning to tell upon him; his ribs not being so much like hat-rails since Stewart took him in hand.

"The next few days will make all the difference in him, sir; he is now two stone better than he was; they are letting him in light, too."

"What! Are the weights out, then?"

"Yes, sir. He is in at seven one, and that hill, just before you come to the bend, seems to suit him."

The grey starts, showing undeniable pace, returning to the stand, not a hair being turned.

"Do you know where the little horse came from, Newbolt?"

"From Matthews, at Kimberley, sir. He raced him last year up country, but sold him on account of bad feet. He shows no signs of unsoundness now, and it is soft going here, it is."

"Well! good night, Newbolt, I must catch my train."

"Good night, sir."

"I wonder if the bloke saw he was never extended? This horse will be nuts to the bookies; the favourite will be nowhere. He comes up that hill and round into the straight like an express train. If he leads there he is a moral; and I ain't got no fear

about their trying to get at him, for he's a rank outsider. Come on, my cherub!"

The jockey takes his horse to his stable, Douglas just catching his train.

CHAPTER III.

THE COURSE.

THE next few days pass, and it is the race morning, the 22nd Hussars, in force, are waiting on the club steps for their conveyance to take them to the course.

"Here comes our drag!"

"Would look well at Ascot. Be rather a swagger team, I think."

The team spoken of consists of ten mules and an ambulance, which turns the corner in great style, and pulls up opposite the door.

"Think we ought to send this to the *Graphic*!"

"Yes, you draw it."

"What shall we call it?"

"A Regimental Drag in South Africa!"

They all get in, and away they go rattling over the stones, the driver shouting, his henchman laying into the unfortunate mules with his long raw hide.

"Hi, you Johnny!"

"That was a narrow squeak!"

"Wonder what they would charge for running over a Kaffir?"

"Oh, I say! Shan't have a tooth left in my head!"

"Sit tight!"

Bang! Rattle! Bump! And the ambulance clears a regular double like a chaser.

"Should have a race for this sort of concern across country!"

"Here we are at the gate; can't go in with this; must get down."

They all alight, our hero going off with Reid.

"Grand stand, sir?"

"Yes, and paddock."

"Can't get paddock tickets here, sir! Must pay up above."

"All right! How much for this?"

"Five bob!"

"Here's half a sov. Reid, you can get the paddock tickets."

The two friends stroll up the course towards the stand.

A South African course is not like Epsom during a race meeting, my friends.

Here are no Aunt Sallys, no cocoa nuts, nor our friends in the gaily-striped unmentionables, with bones and tambourines.

We do not hear the soft strains of

"Dear old Brown turned upside-down,
"And his legs sticking up in the air, oh my!"

or similar drawing-room melodies.

We do not see our friends sticking knives through their ears, trying to inveigle us into buying purses for half a crown, into which they have just placed half a sovereign and some loose silver.

"Saw me put it in, sir."

"No, they are not here."

But the crowd is well conducted, and I must say there is a wonderful absence of bad language, nothing to shock the most sensitive ears.

"C'rect card, sir! Only sixpence."

"Yes, give me one. First race at twelve. Come on, Reid, the saddling bell is just ringing. Ah! the hurdle race just after the luncheon interval."

"What race is this?"

"Six furlongs."

"Who are running?"

"Blue Peter, Assegai, Petrach, Whisker, and Bluff. No name scratched."

"The bookmakers are hard at it. Six to four Blue Peter; five to one Assegai."

"I'm betting on the hurdle race!"

"Two to one bar one! Two to one the field!"

"Roll up, gentlemen! Roll up! I give the best prices in the colony."

But Douglas does not heed them, for he is waiting to plump on the last race.

He and Reid go into the paddock to watch the saddling.

"Are you going to do anything, Reid?"

"No, I am not a betting man."

The race is run off, Assegai winning in a canter, the bookies get hilarious, and shout themselves hoarse.

"Shall we have some lunch?"

"Yes, may as well. There is the club tent; come and sample the Monopole."

Luncheon passes; the hurdle race takes place, Yellow Fog falling as predicted, Stewart escaping with a barked nose and a mouthful of mud.

Race after race follows, and now is the great event of the day.

The bookies are at it again.

The eighty-one-tonner, as he calls himself, sits under a huge umbrella, on a raised platform, a slate with the odds scored on it by his side.

The well-known cries are again heard. "Six to four Pride of Erin; a pony to five pounds Maid of Athens; two to one the President; ten to one Vesuvian."

"Going to have a dart, Douglas?"

"Yes! But I think Vesuvian will go lower yet. Come on to the paddock."

Pride of Erin, the favourite, is a tall, powerful-looking horse, and is the centre of attraction, and Douglas, as he looks at his glossy coat and thoroughly fit condition, feels his heart sink, for there is no gainsaying it, he looks far more like a winner than the Vesuvian pony, who even now looks somewhat ragged, and calls for no attention.

"What do you say, Reid?"

"Shall express no opinion; Pride of Erin looks all there, though; but back your own fancy, old boy!"

"Well, I can't help it; here goes a man or a mouse on Vesuvian."

Reid (*sotto voce*), "Wish you well out of it."

CHAPTER IV.

THE RACE.

STEWART is in the paddock saddling Vesuvian himself, looking rather comical, with a strip of court plaster across his nose, and whispers over his shoulders to Douglas:

"Never mind the pony's look, I have some money on him. You should have seen the eighty-one tonner's look of delight as he booked me."

The jockeys mount and go out for the preliminary canter.

Reid moves off towards the stand, but Douglas catches him by the arm.

"May I ask you a favour, old man?"

"Yes, twenty if you like; what is it?"

"You are going to use your glasses, are you not?"

"Yes! What on earth is your little game?"

"Well, I am going to stop in the ring, and I want you, if Vesuvian should happen to be leading, rounding the bend, to lower them for a second."

"Certainly. All right; I will."

By this time the canter is over, and the horses are walking slowly round the course towards the mile-and-half post.

The ring is quiet, for most of the bets are booked, and nearly all of the bookmakers have gone to the rails to watch the finish, as the judge's box is only a few yards away.

The eighty-one tonner is an exception, and remains seated, ready to turn a penny, even at the last moment.

There is a shout, "They're off!" and Douglas watches Reid carefully, who, according to promise, has raised his glasses.

It is an anxious moment; no one will rise to the bait of the eighty-one tonner, as he continues to shout, "Twelve to one, Vesuvian; fourteen to one, Vesuvian; fifteen to one, Vesuvian pony!"

The glasses drop. Douglas turns his head, saying quietly, "Take you, four ponies."

The eighty-one tonner books it like a shot, a smile passing over his face.

What a din, what shouting, as they thunder into the straight.

"Pride of Erin wins! No, he doesn't! Yes, he does! The favourite's beat! Pride of Erin's flogging!"

A moment of suspense, and a grey leading, flashes past the rails. Vesuvian, hard held, is a winner by a length. Pride of Erin second. Third horse nowhere.

The jockeys are weighed in, and up go the numbers, everything correct.

Then the bookmakers raise a shout, with the exception of the eighty-one tonner, who looks glum, answering the jeers of his comrades with the remark:

"Publish it in the *Mercury*, why don't you?"

They gather round in a circle singing variations of their own composing, to the tune of the "See Saw" waltz and "Razors in the Air."

Gradually the course clears. Cigars are lighted, the spectators wending homewards.

Our hero feels happy. He can now return to England with safety, and start afresh, for he is a winner of some fifteen hundred pounds.

The commencement of our tale was "BROKE," but I think, with me, you will be pleased at the close to call it "MENED."

"HUSSAR."

GLIMPSES OF OUT-OF-WORK LONDON.

AS SEEN BY BIBLE-WOMEN AND NURSES.

“**W**HAT? More Out-of-Work! More Unemployed! Surely now May has come we may be allowed a slight respite from the cries of our London Lazarus! The fact is Lazarus is becoming rather a bore. Six months of him at a stretch is more than one can stand, you know! Besides, he ought to be in work again by this time.”

Such is the greeting I expect for this article; the expectation is not encouraging, yet I cannot blame the utterers of these sentiments, for on the very first tickling of the sun's light and heat I too feel it difficult to realize that there has been a winter at all, much less a winter from which thousands in whom I feel the deepest interest will never recover. A merciful Providence dulls the memory to past pain while it often leaves a thrill of delight long untouched by time.

A morning in the middle of March seems destined to remain to me bright and undimmed:

“'Mid many a day struck calm.”

It was the morning on which we awoke to find that the ground so long frost-bound and arid was again soft and moist, that the nip was out of the air, that the biting nor'-easter had given place to the soft south-west wind, that Hope and Spring were indeed once more in the offing. By the gratitude and delight with which I welcomed that morning I measure the length and misery of the past winter. It is as yet only about ten days since, but I fancy I shall remember the sensation as clearly ten years hence.

But the big pear tree I see from the window, as I write, is still black and bare, although the sun shines on the grass beneath it; it will be a mass of snowy blossom when you read this; by that time you will—But I must not allow myself to wander into orchards and May. Out-of-work London is still a grim fact; I have seen and heard plenty of it within the last three days. I hope much of it may have become “just-started-work London” long before hawthorn buds appear. “But,” as a good little Bible-woman, who has quite knocked herself up, said to me only yesterday, “People think, Oh, it's all right, as soon as they've started work again; but for ever so long they are almost as badly off as when

they were out of work. As soon as they take their first week's money, nearly all must go for back rent. Then there's money owing to the baker and the general shop, things in pawn to get out, and new boots that must be had. It will be pretty nearly all the summer before the most careful get straight, even if they keep in regular work. But many of them are in for a few weeks and then they're out again."

The amount of back rent owing all over the working-class neighbourhoods just now must be something enormous; and of this a large proportion is owing to small householders, who must punctually pay the landlord, although they themselves can get no rent from their lodgers.

The kindness and forbearance shown by these poor householders to their lodgers are truly wonderful. Only yesterday I saw a most respectable woman, a "landlady," or holder of a house, whose husband, a house painter, had been out of work all the winter, and who, with her large family of little children, had been brought down to absolute want; yet this good creature not only was going without the rent of a good-sized house full of lodgers, but was actually sharing such scanty meals as she had with a poor old widow in a top room, from whom it is highly improbable she will ever get a penny.

"My landlady" is a very important factor in these much-sublet houses. Most nobly, kindly, and generously has she come to the front during this sad winter; although of course there are exceptions, and human nature being what it is, Monday morning is sometimes a trying time.

But as a rule, "my landlady," who knows her lodgers' position as well as her own, does not fight against the inevitable; if she turned out the lodgers she has the next comers would be as poor, so she waits and takes her chance. As a rule, too, she is not disappointed—she is the first to be paid when her lodger "starts work again," and her—let us say—five shillings a week for three or four months is indeed a serious "pull-back."

The necessity of yielding to the inevitable is a lesson that even children learn—here is as sad an instance as you can well have.

Near the painter's wife I have just mentioned there lives another house-painter and his family. He too has been out of work all the winter. They have been without food for days together. One of our nurses found them out and took them some loaves. The poor little children looked at the bread with ravenous eyes, but they never spoke a word—they just stood by the table waiting quietly while their mother cut them slices.

"They are always like that," said the poor woman; "they never hang about me like some children would do; they never say, 'Mother, give us some bread!' they know I would give it them if I could." Yet those children had been so long without food that I dare not put down the time. Poor creatures! perhaps

they had given up all hopes of ever having anything to eat again ! How sad and terrible the patience of childhood can become ! Is there anything more pathetic than a patiently-starving child ?

In these glimpses of Out-of-Work London I am purposely keeping away from the East End, partly because the East End has been so very much written about lately, and partly because the East End is so huge and powerful a magnet that if we were once within its influence it would be difficult to tear ourselves away from it. There is a certain romance about the East End. It is not wonderful that philanthropists have felt stirred to enthusiasm by it, too often to the neglect of other quarters.

On a fine summer day, two or three years ago, I stood on the roof of the White Tower and looked eastwards. It was a most impressive sight, those vast stretches of docks, and docks, and docks, stretching miles and miles down the river, far as eye could see and far beyond. When you know, too, that that great length is nearly equalled inland by a breadth of closely-packed dwellings, it is almost overwhelming. There is something so vast in the extent of the East End, there seems literally no end to the enormous hordes that fill every habitable nook and cranny from far beyond the once "fishful" but now malodorous Lea to the Tower, that one is altogether lost in wonder, perhaps even in despair.

No human mind can grasp the sum of human misery endured in the East End this winter, to much of which, alas ! the spring will bring but little relief. Wide as the docks look when you see them spread out below as in a vast map, they have become ridiculously inadequate to accommodate the gigantic steamships of our Mercantile Marine. The trade of the Thame's Pool is rapidly going eastward to the river's mouth, the artisan and labourer follow slowly ; and when they reach the work it is to find how much is being done, better and quicker than human hands can manage it, by steam or hydraulic machinery. The distress in the East End will not pass away on the first fine day. It is a subject demanding the brains and energies of the greatest thinkers and workers in England. We dare not hope things will be better there next winter ; in all probability they will be worse.

Here is just one glimpse of out-of-work East End life. We should not be wrong in taking it as a type of hundreds.

"Our Stepney nurse has been attending Mrs. Sweetman and her new baby, but this morning we found the mother sitting up, working hard at finishing off boys' knickerbocker suits. She has to make five button holes, sew on ten buttons, fell in the linings, soap and press the seams, finding her own thread and soap ; for this she receives 1½d. a pair.

"By working hard at them from early morning until late at night she cannot possibly earn more than 1s. 3d., which is what is paid for a dozen pairs. But the husband is out of work and the

five children are hungry, so she is glad to work ever so hard to provide food, though she looks so sadly weary and in need of rest and of a good meal."

I might easily fill my space with details of East End misery, but as so many are trying to cope with it let us leave it for less known neighbourhoods and go up to Battersea in the south-west. The Battersea we will visit is not the river-side people's park, with its broad, fertile acres, its lake and pleasure boats, its sub-tropical garden, its Albert Palace, and so on, but an inland Battersea that has sprung up like a mushroom, or, some might say, like a toad-stool, within the last ten years, on fields that not long since were marshes.

I visited this Battersea last week just as the cold weather was breaking, and it seemed to me a modern and very dismal rendering of the Valley of the Shadow of Death—a land of consumption and bronchitis, of pleurisy and croup, where chest and throat diseases of all sorts were rampant, and where nearly every one was out of work.

Yet the roads were wide, the houses nearest the main thoroughfare boasted a couple of storeys and neatly-curtained windows; farther down were only one-storey dwellings of the regulation type, which doubtless had looked pretty enough when first built only a very few years ago. Now the cheap stucco is chipped, the cheap Venetians hanging loosely from their broken "ladders," the cheap ironwork of gates and rail rusting—a most melancholy, heart-breaking district, shrouded on that day in a deadly white mist, where those who were pretty well were absorbed in a desperate struggle to get a mouthful to eat, and those who were ill in fighting for breath.

Kind people were doing what they could by providing penny dinners for the children. Our nurse from this district is a kind motherly being, with a specially soft place in her heart for the little ones. I found her in a mission premises, redolent of pea-soup—the mid-day meal just over, the children sent off to school, but droppers-in of older growth coming with jugs for their share of what was left.

A sack of potatoes was reposing on the forms. In the evening Nurse and her helper would get them peeled for the morrow's dinner, for food is here the medicine most needed.

Armed with a great can of soup and a bag containing plenty of linseed meal, lint, clean linen, and many other needments, we, Nurse and I, went out into the district. First we took the soup to a widower and his four boys. The widower was at home out of work. He was a well-spoken, "very superior" looking middle-aged man. He had been a gentleman's servant the greater part of his life, he could do anything in a house, clean plate, paint, walls, anything. He and his boys were all in one room; certainly he kept it in as good order as was possible under the circumstances,

the bed was neatly made and the floor swept; but as for the poor boys they were ragged enough, and they would have been absolutely barefooted had not Nurse begged boots for them at our Mother House,* where we keep a store of such things. The father still managed to keep up a tolerably respectable appearance out of doors, for without it all chance of getting work would be lost. Few would have guessed the destitution of his home, unless they had carefully noted the expression of chronic anxiety in his face and eyes. He seemed very grateful for the trifle we gave him.

We left the widower and his boys, but hardly had I time to realize how sorry I was for them than I was in an upstairs room, where a poor woman, with a fearfully hard-racking cough was distressfully tossing about as if fighting for breath. A seven days' old baby was lying beside her, a mite of two had fallen asleep in the railed chair, from which it could not escape—there was no one looking after any of them.

Nurse soon had the kettle boiling, and a fine linseed and mustard poultice on the dreadful chest, and in a few minutes the breathing grew easier and the distressful tossings ceased, and the patient could speak a few short sentences. Sadly, most sadly depressed she was, poor thing. The husband had had a stroke some time ago; he had recovered, but all he had to depend upon was canvassing for an insurance office. He too, like his neighbour, had to keep up a respectable appearance out of doors; but many a day he returned without having earned a penny. We put a shilling under the wife's pillow, and were afterwards glad we had done so, for we met the husband returning from his fruitless rounds just before we entered another small house in which there were four families, all out of work. We could hear Nurse's patient coughing long before we reached her room—an unmistakably consumptive cough this time, and the patient, a large-made elderly woman, grown gaunt with illness, sitting up in the bed upon which she could never lie. Husband was elderly too, a stonemason out of work, sitting by a dying fire in heavy, sullen misery, yet rousing himself when his wife asked him to do anything and trying to do his best. She called him "dear," which is unusual among the working classes, and struck me as denoting gentler training on the wife's part. The wife could only speak in gasps, but she liked to talk, and in fact managed to get through a good deal of personal narrative. The husband was very taciturn, he only said one sentence that I remember. Nurse asked him if he had applied for aid from the Mansion House Fund. He shook his head with decision.

"But you should! Why don't you?"

"I couldn't do it for a sovereign!" he exclaimed, raising his

* London Bible and Domestic Female Mission, 2, Adelphi Terrace Strand, W.C.

head for one moment and then at once turning to the fire that was then just on the point of expiring.

Another poultice was badly needed here. The fire refused to boil even the little drop of water necessary to make it. They borrowed three sticks of firewood from the people in the next room, and so managed the affair. The poor old body was so thankful when she felt the comforting heat! We gave her a shilling, and she sent off her boy at once for a quarter of a hundred of coals and a bundle of wood. I hope that stonemason whom his wife addressed as "dear" will have found work long before you read this; but he is getting on in years, and nowadays employers don't much care for a man when his hair turns grey.

Nurse assured me that in house after house, in room after room—for there are three or four families in every house—it was very much the same. Out of work! Out of work! was the main theme, with a running accompaniment of various chest and throat diseases, new babies, dying children, and more than a suspicion, felt but unexpressed, of a radically unsanitary state of affairs proceeding from deficient subsoil drainage—a subtle something that seemed to tell one that the primitive marsh, though apparently subdued, still existed down below. A more thoroughly depressing place one could hardly imagine. Many good ladies and gentlemen are moved at times to go and visit among these poverty-stricken habitations; but as a rule they soon give it up, leaving it to mission workers; perhaps we had better follow their example, yet it is a district not easily to be forgotten. I am happy to state that our good Scotch visitor, whom I mentioned in my last paper, has been down there with some of the money sent us by working men in work.

Leaving Battersea, let us cross the river and go north to Latimer Road, Notting Hill, also a comparatively new neighbourhood and a most wretched one, a far more wretched-looking one than the Battersea district we have just quitted, but having the advantage of a higher and healthier situation.

Latimer Road Station is on the Outer Circle Railway. From the line you only get a faint idea of the extent of the neighbourhood, but you have probably noticed the carpet-beating in the open spaces and the gipsies' caravans that are put up in certain yards when not required.

I shall never forget visiting Latimer Road on a summer Sunday evening, nearly three years ago, for certain local peculiarities made a deep impression upon me. The gipsies are a distinct feature. Some kind people have little tea-parties on Sundays, to which the wild girls of the place are invited, and after tea go to church. I went to church with one of these parties and very much interested I was. There was a typical young gipsy girl next to me, with oh, such bright dark eyes, so full of mischief,

such an olive skin, with such a fine flush of colour in the cheeks, and such a brilliant blue necklace! She kneeled beside me, chanting the Psalms at the top of her good voice, evidently with the greatest enjoyment of the music; then suddenly she would lunge out with her strongly-booted foot and the girl on the other side of her would wrinkle up her face as if she had just been kicked, while the gipsy went on with her chanting more vigorously than ever.

That whole district seemed positively swarming with human life—every street, every door-step, every basement kitchen in the tramps' lodging-house, every upper room—and a more disreputable lot of people, taken as a whole, it would be hard to find.

We have an excellent nurse in this part of the Latimer Road district, and very queer stories she could tell, but they would be more of the "slum" and chronic-want character than glimpses of Out-of-Work London. There is, however, another part of the same district where people are quite as poor—indeed, really poorer—but where they are far more industrious and striving.

The boys of Harrow School have taken this neighbourhood under their protection; they support a well-organized mission there, and one of our nurses is part of the staff. It was she who told me that sad story about the out-of-work painters and the quiet little children. Nearly the whole of her district has been in terrible straits this past winter, and is only very slowly getting into work again; and for some of the men even if work came now they could not take it. One man, whose family we visited, and whom Nurse knew well, some weeks ago had declared that he *would* find work—that he would not return home until he *had* found work. He set off on a long tramp, walked to Bristol, stopping at many a town on the way. He constantly wrote to his wife. Disappointed time after time, he still always finished with, "Cheer up, my girl, I *will* get work somehow!" So he went hoping on and tramping on; but the farther he went the worse things looked. He got as far as Coventry, and then was forced to give up. He came back with what is called "a housemaid's knee," and when we called on his wife, he himself was laid up in the infirmary and his family receiving parish relief.

It is indeed saddening to think how many are now seeing this bright sunshine and hearing that things are beginning to look up a bit and that here and there a mate is starting work again, who must know that weary weeks must pass before strength even to look for employment will return to them. Too many men have gone down this winter never to rise again; those who all the year round are going over the same ground, visiting the same houses and rooms, know only too well how this winter has told on the bread-winners. Other men there are whose health, although severely shaken, is not radically injured. Some of the money we

have received has gone to such cases as these, and has been spent in giving food to the man who has just got work, and so has helped him through the first week until the wages have been paid, thus preventing the break-down that so often succeeds a long period of privation.

We have a homely Seaside Home at Southend, of which our guests always speak with the greatest enthusiasm. The matron, with whom every one who has been under her care is personally deeply in love, and whose praises I have heard sung in more poor London districts than I could mention, tells us that her guests are quite as much the victims of want as of disease.

"What is the matter with you?" is her usual question as they arrive.

"General debility, matron," was a recent answer; "at least that's what the doctor calls it, but if I told the truth I should say trouble and starvation."

Trouble and starvation! That is, indeed, the true story of nearly all our patients. A fortnight at Southend, which means generous living for fifteen days without having to think how it is to be paid for, has sent many a failing man or woman back to London fit to fight once more the stern hard battle of artisan life; and with improved looks and perhaps a "rig-out" from our store of clothes, it has often happened that an employer has at once taken on a man who, ill and shabby, would not have had a chance of even an odd job.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of a nice long and very cosy chat with a lady who superintends one of our more central districts. I am glad, of course, that she is a real person, but whenever I see her I long for the freedom of fiction that I might describe her as she is. In fact, the one complaint I have to make against our Mission is, that it abounds with good and very characteristic people and that I am not allowed to reveal either them or their excellences to the reader. This is a cross which I strive to bear meekly, but which imposes an ever-present and irksome restraint; for there is nothing that I enjoy more than getting a portrait on paper. Alas! how dearly I have sometimes paid for that pleasure! "Never no more, my friend! Never no more!" This is what I often have to tell myself, lingering, as at this very moment, dangerously near the brink of temptation. There—I will do my duty! She shall be a blank! I will leave out all that makes her what she is—all her bright genial, kind-hearted ways, her shrewd common sense.

She looks after hundreds of families, innumerable mothers, still more innumerable babies. At her large meeting she drives quite a wholesale trade; and if, as drapers say, "her line is desperate," her stock is first-rate. She has a Bible-woman and a nurse; she is a Guardian of the poor, she sits on boards and on endless committees; she has lately been helping in the distribution of the

Mansion House Fund. "I shall come at such a time and bring my patent pump with me." Thus I made an appointment with her.

So I went, but, dear thing, she required no pumping! She began at once.

"Well, you know, I've only been running errands for them; and some of it's done good and some hasn't. I was sent to one house; I knew the people. They were having tea. They said, 'But lor, mum, you must get very tired and thirsty with running about all day—you'd better have a cup of tea!' So I had a cup, then I took out two florins and a shilling and laid them on the table, fearing that the gift might be considered too small. The wife took them up. 'Look here, old man,' she said. 'We didn't expect all this, did we? Five shillings is a deal of money for us poor people!' And she turned the coins over and over as if she had never before seen anything so beautiful. I was afraid that her married daughter, who had had tickets and not coin, would feel aggrieved, so I said I was sorry I hadn't anything for her that time. 'Oh, never mind,' she returned quite pleasantly, 'I've had my share.'"

But some have been really abusive. They've looked at the money like the cabman when you have given him only his legal fare.

"What's this? What's a paltry six shillings? Do you know there's been £60,000 collected for us? And to go and give us *this*!' They've no idea of the size of London nor of the number of people out of work. Oh, but some have been very nice, and as soon as it has been given they've called out to the people in the next room just like children, 'Oh, come and see what I've got!' and the others have seemed almost as pleased. I was sent to one family with a second donation. A little girl, who somehow connected her new boots with my last visit, ran up to me and put her foot and its very muddy boot on my knee to show me her new treasure; she was delighted with it."

I think it was in this house my friend had seen a teapot full of pawn-tickets. She was exceedingly amused with the little girl and her new boots.

"But I was obliged to rebel in several instances. I said, 'I really can't take the money to these cases; I know they are not suitable', and I refused and begged for others I could depend upon. Once or twice, though, I obeyed orders against my own inclination, and the people I was sent to weren't sober for some time after." Which reminds me that one of our nurses had told me a few days before that she had had tickets given her for people she knew were undeserving, and others to whom she would have been so thankful to have taken them were going without. "I did not like it, but I could not help it," she said, and subsequent events showed that she too had been right. Which shows very plainly

that in all these distributions the advice of those intimately acquainted with the neighbourhood should be sought.

"Well, I think on the whole we did a great deal of good," continued my friend. "We got tools out of pawn, and so on. One woman who was a clever machine hand had lost her machine; we redeemed that for her. Now she is in work and is paying us back in instalments. Then we found out several people whom we could help further. For instance, there was a man who had had pleurisy and was still very weak; we've sent him away to Ramsgate. Then several have joined our Meeting in consequence of our visits, and best of all we have found fresh openings for real Bible-work. But the fund has now nearly come to an end, and work is slowly coming back again."

After a little talk about different things, she said:

"A friend of mine who works in Marylebone says, 'In Marylebone we live upon luxuries, so this winter we have been badly off.'"

I did not see this very clearly at first; but found it to mean that in Marylebone, as doubtless in other West End neighbourhoods, the luxuries of the rich find the homely comforts for the artisans. Now this year there has been a great falling off in the luxuries, and consequently a proportionate curtailment of the homely comforts. The lesson is obvious—those who have money should spend just now as much as they in prudence can. In the present state of affairs the liberal buyer, if he be also the prompt payer, is distinctly a public benefactor. Unfortunately, the luxurious classes are apt to take very long credit; if some of them who have consciences knew the fatal results to the poor of their tardy payments, they would sooner live on the scantiest fare than incur the guilt of such crimes; therefore, while I say, Buy, I add, But only buy what you can speedily pay for; that is, supposing you want to do good by your purchases.

But I am afraid I shall be accused of holding a brief for Out-of-Work London. Well, our reports of yesterday were still one long wail of sickness, destitution, and out of work. What a panorama of suffering passed before our minds as the plain unvarnished details of case after case, in district after district, were read aloud to us! No, Out-of-Work London is still a grim reality. There is not, in the present state of trade, work for all to do; there will not be, it is feared, by those who know best, for many a long day yet. Everything that can be done to keep working country people from coming to town ought to be done; every channel for new work in our colonies that can be opened up ought to be opened.

I am not, however, prepared to say that the British working man, any more than the British employer or the much-abused capitalist, is absolutely without blame. There are a good many sides to most questions, especially to Out-of-Work London; also there are several ways of stating things. For instance, there is an

old gardener of ninety, who still delights to potter about a garden I know, and still more delights in a friendly chat.

"I had a brother once who was killed at Waterloo," he will begin, slowly and solemnly. Imagination pictures the hero's glorious death on the battle-field.

After a long pause the old man goes on :

"It were three days after the battle, it were ! He were a-coming along with a bottle of gin in his hand, and his comrades says to him, ' You'd best mind what you're after with that bottle,' for they see he weren't quite steady ; but he wouldn't take no heed, and presently he fell down and the bottle smashed into him and cut him awful, so he died."

There are doubtless plenty of out-of-work men about who truly *are out of work*, but for whom one would have little compassion could one know all their story. Still this sad winter has brought to our notice not once but many times an heroic fortitude which we ought to be grateful indeed to know is possessed by countrymen of our own. Seldom has anything touched me more deeply than the true incident with which I close.

A certain family lived all last winter on tickets, which gave them three days a week soup and bread, and they made it last them the other days as well. The father *could* not get work. He is a good husband and father, and when dinner-time came those days of short food, he always went out that he might not run the risk of being tempted to share the scanty meal. Work came at last. He rejoiced and worked hard ; but in a month or so his health gave way. This Mission, however, was a great help to him and he recovered. I am most thankful to hear he is now in a good situation.

Do not think there is no Out-of-Work London because the May sun is shining. Bible-women and Nurses know there is.

LIZZIE ALLDRIDGE.

THE HEART'S WEAKNESS.

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER J. ALLEN.

WHICH is the weakest thing of all
Mine heart can ponder ?
The sun a little cloud can pall
With darkness yonder.
The cloud a little wind can move
Where'er it listeth ;
The wind, a little leaf above,
Though sere resisteth.

What time that yellow leaf was green
My days were gladder ;
But now, whatever Spring may mean,
I must grow sadder.
Ah me ! a *leaf* with sighs can wring
My lips asunder—
Then is mine heart the weakest thing
Itself can ponder.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XII.

DENE ABBEY.

AT the corner of the street Mr. Pemberton and his phaeton stood waiting. A light conveyance, drawn by two prime specimens of horseflesh; beside them a tall, limp, fair, philanthropic-looking young man. His animals showed uncontrollable impatience, and no wonder. They had been kept there all the time that Charlotte had been haranguing me.

"Mr. Pemberton, ahoy! Don't go away; here I am," shouted Miss Hope, hailing him from a distance as if he were a ship, causing the passers-by to turn and look, making him blush with annoyance. "Splendid fellows," she exclaimed as she came up, patting the horses' heads, with an unconscious glance of invidious comparison at their master.

"It is four o'clock," he remarked, "and if, as you said, you wish to return here in time for the night's performance——"

"Servant," said Miss Hope, springing lightly to the front seat before he could assist her, and forgetting to explain me to him at all. Politely taking me for granted, he assisted me to mount behind, dismissed his servant, who had instructions to bring over our stage luggage, took the reins and drove off. The horses were strong and skittish, and he managed them with a skilful ease so devoid of flourish that it excited no admiration in you, as for difficulty overcome. Just as the high C taken without strain by a true soprano creates no sensation, whilst the *prima donna* who appears to imperil her life in the effort brings down the house. The man's whole character was in his driving. Nothing in him ever fetched what it was worth.

Miss Hope regarded him frankly at a loss. He was so markedly unlike those green-room *habitués* of high degree, upon whom mostly is founded the British actor's idea of the British aristocracy. Mr. John Pemberton looked like an amateur clergyman by comparison. What an admirable schoolmaster was lost to the world in him!

"Have you drawn up your programme?" he asked of her by-and-by.

"Subject to her Grace's approval," replied Charlotte grandly, "and as follows: First night—'Miss.' By desire. Not my desire, if you please."

"The Duchess's particular wish," he explained. "She has a high admiration for Bret Harte's works, which to some extent I share."

Man alive, what a left-handed compliment to Miss Hope! Not a word about her "unrivalled impersonation," "two-world triumphs," and so forth. She resumed:

"Second night—'The Sheep in Wolf's Clothing,' the principal character by Miss Adams, who sits behind you," choosing for presentation this rather awkward moment, considering our respective positions in the carriage.

"Jasper Carew is Edwin Davenant's pet part," Charlotte continued. "Then follows the balcony scene from 'Romeo and Juliet.' I play Romeo; you don't object?" looking at him with mock gravity.

"There is always something to object to, in my opinion, in a reversal of the rôles of the sexes." ("Prig!" Miss Hope managed this cleverly aside to me.) "Approve it entirely I cannot. Still, in a purely poetical creation like Romeo it is more tolerable and may pass."

Miss Hope glanced at her neighbour's inexpressive features and loose-jointed figure comically, as if conjecturing how *he* would look in the part, then remarked with decision, "It must pass. Those who don't like it may just stop away. We have to do what can be done without rehearsal. And now, Mr. Pember-ton, I've a very particular favour to ask you."

He looked more frightened than flattered to hear it. She saw nothing, finding the prancing horses a more entertaining spectacle than her Jehu.

"It is," she continued, "that Miss Adams, who is ready to superintend the stage arrangements for to-morrow, and the unpacking of our boxes, may have house-room for to-night also at the Abbey. It will save incalculable trouble."

"Is that all?" he asked, relieved. "We can provide accommodation for as many of your number as you like to send in advance."

"Thank you kindly; but one head is better than a dozen. Miss Adams will see to everything; she knows exactly what is wanted."

This was an unmitigated fib, but I hoped to make it true. Already we had passed through the lodge gates, and the roofs of the Abbey, lying sheltered and low, soon peeped through the trees—a country house whose plain style removes all temptation, happily, to minute description. Old Dene Abbey, in another part of the park, was a ruin whose picturesque bits were carefully built up again as fast as bad weather brought them down; the substantial modern dwelling-house called after it might have been a school or small barrack for its straight-lined, spic-and-span monotony of outline. Nevertheless, as we drove down the hill,

amid stretches of park land studded with branching trees, and among them the gigantic ash, under whose shade, according to a dear old ballad, the last Earl of Dene Dene murdered his brother, the divinity that doth hedge a duke, or even a duchess dowager, set me trembling like a leaf. To be sure, Mr. Pemberton was no such very alarming specimen, but you can never judge from the men of the family, you know.

The ladies—Mr. Pemberton was told by the servants, who, unlike Mr. Danvers' myrmidons, received us in the front hall as respectfully as if we were bishops—had not returned from their drive. He led us into a second, larger, white stone hall beyond, which some village carpenters were hard at work converting into a poor apology for a theatre. "What a shame!" hissed Miss Hope in my ear. "Here have we been playing at Broadgate in a capital theatre night after night to empty benches, and to-morrow all the county will crowd to see us on this absurdity of a stage, all appliances wanting, and rush for stalls at a guinea apiece!"

With her wonted lucidity and rapidity, she gave the needful directions to the carpenters, which I was deputed to stay and see carried out. This done, she signified to Mr. Pemberton she must be driven back immediately. No time for more than a parting whisper to me.

"Here you stay for three days, safe enough. Won't Slater be wild? He daren't look you up here. I shall play the innocent, of course."

"And then?" I asked.

"Oh, we'll see when the time comes."

For her, to stave off a difficulty till the day after to-morrow seemed the same as to stave it off for ever. More than once she had been justified by the event. But when I heard the phaeton wheels roll away, judge how I felt, left behind in that lone, large country mansion, every door that slammed reminding you of the size of the place by its resounding echoes, every stroke of the workmen's hammer likewise. Like a castaway on a rock, I felt safe from sharks certainly—I quailed when I thought of Slater—but not otherwise comfortable, and very much out of place. Happily I had no leisure for thinking, and when I had made sure of the smooth working of the sliding doors of Jasper Carew's practicable cupboard and other scenic devices, I must proceed to the unpacking of Miss Hope's elaborate costumes, Miss's rags as artistic a study in their way as the Montague's velvet suit. Two rooms had been assigned me on the ground floor in a wing of the house. At eight my dinner was brought me in my sitting-room, where, towards ten o'clock, I was still busy with stage preparations, when I had an unexpected visitor in the person of Mr. John Pemberton's wife.

Strikingly pretty she looked, as she stood on the threshold in a

soft silky white dinner-dress of some costly Indian texture. Her childlike air had something in it of a queen's confidence of conferring a favour by her mere presence. A fair lady, out of doubt, yet the very last you would have expected Mr. John Pemberton to choose for a wife, was the simple reflection I made then.

"I have come to see if you have everything you want," said she, beaming on me condescendingly, like some child-angel come to scatter Christmas gifts.

"Everything, thank you very much; that is, if I might ask the housekeeper for a little more gum arabic, and some meteoric plate-powder."

"Send for whatever you wish," she said, glancing round at the scattered bits of theatrical bric-à-brac, with a light passing curiosity, then at me as at another bit.

"Have you been long on the stage?" she inquired presently.

"A little more than a year. It seems longer."

"Do you not like it?"

"Sometimes," I said cautiously.

"You must get very tired of acting the same part night after night," she rejoined—a remark we all get very tired of hearing made us at every turn. I always make the same answer.

"There are so many things we have to repeat every day of our lives—dressing, dining, and so on. The play is much more interesting, and after all never quite the same two nights running."

She laughed, and seated herself on the sofa, playing with Juliet's dagger, pulling it in and out of its sheath.

"Tell me something about your company," she began.

I was being regularly interviewed, it appeared. Now what could I think of to say about ourselves that would amuse Lady Mabel Pemberton?

"Mr. Slater upholds the star system," I said. "Miss Hope is his star. The rest of us are a mere Milky Way, and give no light in particular."

"Ah, Miss Hope," she repeated with a careless laugh. "What a singular person she is!"

"Yes, she has no rival, in her particular line."

"I meant that she is singularly plain," she made haste to retort, "and not young at all for a star-actress."

"She is not so pretty as you," I mused as I viewed the charming little nondescript before me, "and has had to slave twenty years to win the good things, which I dare say, from your cradle, every one has come like the Magi to lay at your feet." Mr. Pemberton's wife struck me as spoilt, indiscreet, flighty, affected, inconsiderate. So you thought, whilst falling, all the same, under, the charm of the little Irresponsible, whose very faults formed part of her attractions, to strangers, who had not to suffer from them.

"Miss Hope is my only real friend in the company," I observed.

"Indeed? I thought—" she began, with embarrassing significance.

"I beg your pardon?"

"Oh, nothing," she said amused. "It was in the Broadgate paper, you know."

That I and Edwin Davenant were engaged? Yes, I knew. "And the Lynmouth paper said it was Miss Torrens he was engaged to," I rejoined aloud. "There is not a word of truth in either report. For me he cares no more than—than could I for him."

"Well," she replied sympathizingly, "I can believe you. What a pity such a good actor should be so affected and conceited except when he is acting. But there, perhaps, they are all rather alike."

"A little," I said without thinking, "except Mr. Gifford."

"Mr. Gifford is no actor," she reminded me promptly and haughtily; "Mr. Gifford is——"

"A gentleman," I suppose she was going to say, but she checked herself.

"An amateur," I suggested, noticing with surprise that my little lady had not learnt how to control her expression. And the rare rose-pink of her complexion, which led unkind people to assert that she painted, vindicated its true quality by fading out altogether for a second. I continued, "Yet the artists defer to him, he is so clever."

"Mr. Gifford has genius," she said unhesitatingly, "and that is the difference."

It was downright cruel of Mr. Pemberton to choose to interrupt us just at this moment. But men are so conceited. They never dream they can be in the way when only women are present. Lady Mabel—it was her gift, or trick—had contrived to interest me extraordinarily in the space of ten minutes. She was so unlike what I had expected, such a flagrant departure from any lawful, approved type of an English high-born beauty. What maiden dream of hers, I must wonder, was that which Mr. Gifford's name recalled, since she could not hear that name without starting? And what a change in her countenance now! From earnest and wistful it had become wilful and provoking beyond the power of any but child or demon.

"Mabel," began Mr. Pemberton in a tone of long-suffering nearing its end, and of latent reproof, "they are all asking for you." He was looking, not at her, but at me. Was I fit company for his wife for more than five minutes? was what he was thinking. I rather think my youth and the sober dark dress I had on disarmed criticism, which naturally annoyed the critic. Evidently he disliked seeing his wife here.

"Oh, I am coming presently," she replied. "I shall stay here another half-hour, if I think proper," was what she meant, and he knew it. She distinctly resented the interference; whilst his

demeanour was that of one convinced he has yielded too often to perverse caprices of the sort.

Closing the door, he came and stood by the fire, as if to await his wife's pleasure, but definitely cutting short our *tête-à-tête*. It was checkmate to Lady Mabel, who hated being thwarted, as most of us do. Better for Mr. Pemberton had he yielded, like a commonplace, weak-minded, henpecked husband. My presence kept my lady silent, but her expressive face declared for her that this was the last drop, causing the cup of provocation to overflow.

"Perhaps as Mr. Pemberton is here," said I, "he will be so good as to give his opinion about something I am in doubt about. I think Juliet's balcony, as set, is too high, which would ruin the effect of the scene."

"Oh, let us go and see," exclaimed Lady Mabel, welcoming the diversion, and taking for accident what he, I saw from his face, put down as a very strange piece of tact on my part. We found the White Hall empty, the carpenters gone to supper, a couple of gas jets burning, sufficient to illumine the balcony scene. We gathered on the stage to inspect it.

"It looks to me quite correct," said Mr. Pemberton judiciously. "I do not see what alteration is required."

"Oh, but I do," objected his wife quick as thought. "Stay there and I'll show you."

She had espied the ladder-like staircase behind, leading to the balcony, and quickly tripped aloft, placing herself in Juliet's position, and looking down on our two figures below. Mr. Pemberton's countenance showed his rising annoyance. She seemed to perceive nothing, exclaiming :

"Miss Adams is perfectly right. You could not look up without craning your neck. Try, one of you."

"He jests at scars that never felt a wound !"

Very softly she repeated the line, but with a speaking, too-felicitous emphasis.

There she sat aloft, the violets from her dress came falling over the balustrade, strewing the boards under our feet. Mr. Pemberton was plainly in despair at this childish, freakish behaviour—as it were her petty revenge for his insistence just now. I had drawn aside, and sat down behind the masonry of Capulet's house, thinking wisely, as behoves a third person, how foolish are all such altercations, open or implied, between husband and wife, and how savage they can be, about such trifles too !

Lady Mabel, ignoring all hints, all entreating signs to her to desist, went on reciting snatches, as if to herself, till fortunately memory failed her.

"Pray come down," he said, in an agony lest the carpenters should return and find his wife disporting herself on a stage balcony.

"You must own it is much too high," she persisted regardlessly.

"I leave that for Miss Adams to settle with the workmen. I do not pretend—nor, I imagine, will you—to have the experience requisite in such matters. And now," he concluded, glancing at his watch, "unless it is your intention to desert your guests altogether—"

"Well?" she said, with a faint ring of defiance in her tone.

"You will not persist in making yourself conspicuous by your absence any longer."

"I am surprised that my presence should be missed," she retorted readily, "and above all that you should consider it indispensable for their better entertainment."

"It is no question of entertainment, but of common courtesy and propriety. These at least you have not let drop hitherto; and when that happens I am really at a loss what excuses to make for you."

"Pray make none. I had rather bear their censure than those excuses," was her quick reply, audibly given.

Ought I to cough or to sneeze, to remind them that I was near? Perhaps Mr. Pemberton thought me gone. But she, who could see me where I sat, seemed moved to cast appearances to the winds. It was clearly but the climax of long-standing discord.

The best-bred people are but human, and her exasperating speech provoked him to reply with pointed reproach:

"It is true you have accustomed them to expect such strange treatment from your hands that it would scarcely be possible for you to astonish them."

"I wonder," she sighed to herself low, "*I wonder!*" leaning her head on her hand, a very Juliet-like picture.

Romeo, I think, had not heard. Judging persistence worse than useless, he walked away. The very doors shutting behind him had reprobation in their echoes, taken up by his measured tread as he re-entered the drawing-room. Juliet pressed both hands to her face, in agitation becoming uncontrollable. Then she came flying down the rickety stairs so heedlessly that she tripped, and would have fallen had not I, starting from my seat, caught her in my arms.

She drew her hand across her eyes, gave me a blank stare, pale and a little wild, exclaiming bitterly and impetuously:

"Oh, Miss Adams, take care whom you marry!"

The idea of finding a clue to this extraordinary scene in one of those strange nervous temperaments whose vagaries defy all calculation, had crossed me just now, but without lessening my perplexity at this moment. She looked so tragically wretched that almost any woman's heart must have ached for the poor pretty thing, and I could have cried for sympathy. She sank down on the bench beside me, breathless and sobbing hysterically.

"Dear Lady Mabel, how unhappy you look!" I said with sincere solicitude.

"I am the most miserable woman alive," she declared passionately.

"You don't mean it. Think how miserable poor women can be."

"You——" she took her hands from her face, and began, speaking fast and excitedly, "Yes, but you can forget your miseries; you have work to do and know yourselves of use, free too, and leading an active life, with plenty of change, and above all no time to think. You can never know or even guess what life may become in a position where not only is nothing but mechanical conformity required of you, but should you venture to see with your own eyes, to feel, think, speak, act for yourself, such audacity is cried down as unbecoming, persistence in it as criminal almost."

"Yet not one of us but would gladly change places with you."

"Would they?" she said. "They would be wrong." She rose restlessly and stood leaning against the stage framework, shading her face with her hand.

"You can never know what it is to want for friends, for love, or for money. You should be happy."

My remark only provoked a glow of fresh vehemence.

"If to have your outer life made smooth for you, to be kept as they keep the silkworms in Italy, your least want a thing of vital importance, numbers of people busy taking care that your food, your surroundings, everything you touch, shall be of the softest and best—the very air you breathe carefully arranged for you—if that is happiness, then I am content. But suppose there never was a time when these things counted to you as of any worth, and when you did not need something different, and better, and beyond."

She stopped short in her eloquent protest, and concluded as in self-contempt:

"So you marry,—because you are in a hurry to try the only experiment in living that you can!"

How signally in a certain case the experiment had failed I might partly conjecture.

"No experiment," I could not help saying, "since you cannot go back."

"Nor forward. So at twenty your personal life is ended. You must reduce your mind to be the passive shadow of another's, even though it may have no affinity with your own, must evermore see no farther than he sees, desire nothing higher than he desires, limit your thoughts, your heart, your soul, your fancy where his end—take yourself at his valuation, though false. He chose you for what he thought he could make you, not for what you were in reality; then, finding you had and clung to a self that clashed with his favourite prejudices, suffers you for the future as a doll at his

table, a plaything not worth the cost, a troublesome, frivolous thing he has made his wife. This is a man's way of love, for which they say the world is well lost."

"Does it not mean," said I gravely, "that to win the love that is enough you must be willing to sacrifice something in yourself that you hold to?"

She did not seem to hear. The torrent of long pent-up words let loose was past checking now.

"I have leave to find happiness in dresses and dances and jewels if I can, since I cannot in providing blankets for the paupers in his almshouses or pinafores for the school-children. He has his life apart, and there I hamper him. And so it must go on till one or the other of us dies—he chafing under the burden, I under the humiliation of knowing myself one. Who says that it would be doing him wrong to release him?"

"Lady Mabel!" I gasped, horror-struck, but convinced now I was in the presence of one of those nervously-excitabile, variable natures who at certain moments do seem almost irresponsible. Born in another station she would have been a medium and had trances. Probably she would recollect nothing to-morrow of what she was now saying. In her right senses, of course, she would never have come out with a word.

But why had she chosen Mr. Pemberton, her antitype, for the life-experiment? And why had it failed so signally? And why must they dispute so about trifles, and she be so unreasonable and he so provoking? And above all, what incredible thought, what audacity of imagination had prompted her last words, making me draw back from her, for, though wildly spoken, I felt there a touch of the spirit of one set on burning her ships.

But as she stood there with her starry eyes, her pretty, helpless look of passionate appeal, and face like a boy-poet's, she would have disarmed a Draco. Nay, I could believe it was an outbreak of frenzy, that her griefs were as imaginary as Miss Alice's, her rebellious speculations mere froth. An only daughter, a young wife, her case could not be desperate. Mr. Pemberton seemed sorely tried, but no more seriously disturbed than you are by the freaks of a kitten that chooses to frisk on the mantelshelf, destroying your best china ornaments. I drew her down on the bench beside me; a burst of nervous tears came and relieved her brain. I bathed her temples with eau-de-cologne; her emotion was fast subsiding, and I foresaw that as she recovered her reason she would recover her reticence, perhaps look back with a shock of horror on her involuntary self-abandonment. But she seemed slowly to be waking out of a dream.

"Where am I? what have I been saying?" she asked dazedly.

"You spoke as if you were not quite happy—as if you had something on your mind," I answered.

"Did I?" she said, attempting to smile. "I suppose I am not

quite well." She looked at me uneasily, afraid to question further; then, as if instinctively reassured, laid her hand on mine, saying: "You must forget it."

"I will try," said I. There was something so touching in her helplessness and hopeless distress which, whether justifiable or not, was as real as a child's grief over a broken toy, that my voice trembled slightly. She stared at me, not offended, but with some wonder; then, on a sudden impulse, leaned forward and kissed my cheek as she might some foster-sister's—some dependant, whose sympathy you may take for granted, and may take or leave as you think proper.

Mr. Pemberton's next move was a wise one; it was to send the stage-carpenters to alter the scene under my directions, thus removing all temptation to his wife to linger. All traces of agitation had vanished from her manner. She was pale when she left me, but as seemingly composed and self-possessed as though we had passed the last half-hour in determining the level of Capulet's balcony.

The quick change—spontaneous too, and not due to any effort of self-command on her part—was the last of a series of surprises, and would have baffled idle speculation had I been minded or able to indulge in it. But the next morning brought me a stock of employment Lady Mabel should have envied me. In the afternoon the actors came over. Miss Hope and Annie were quartered with me in the wing adjoining the front hall. I had no time to remember that such a person existed as Mr. Slater, or that my situation, by the day after to-morrow, would be little better than that of the destitute orphans we were performing for to-night.

CHAPTER XIII.

MASKS AND FACES.

UNTIL seven o'clock we were hard at work on the stage decorations. At eight the curtain rose on the first scene of "Miss."

Such gala nights are bound to be the dullest, in a dramatic way. Even Miss Hope, upon whom everything rested, acted a degree less finely than her wont, and the attention of the audience was most unequally divided between the play and the details of the inside of Dene Abbey, to treat themselves to the sight of which, and not of our mountebank selves, their guineas had been paid. You could guess, without hearing, the comments that went on.

"Wonderful get-up, that Miss—what is her name?—Pope-Hope? The Indian girl to the life! And did you see, Julia; they've got brass-work fire irons in the hall like ours?"

"How perfectly lovely Lady Mabel looks to-night," sighs Julia

enthusiastically, "with her hair loose at the back. Can that be coming into fashion? Not ladylike? Oh, mamma!"

"No, nor even proper for a married lady," returns mamma with decision. "The dear Duchess recognized me in the crowd as we came in. She looks more delicate than ever; they say her life hangs by a thread. The fatigue of this affair can hardly be safe for her, but she is so wonderfully energetic for an invalid. There's Mr. Pemberton. What a nice face he has!" and here mother and daughter agree, for all ladies, I observed, joined in a chorus of praise over the Duchess's son-in-law, his perverse little wife excepted.

Behind the footlights the selfsame spirit prevailed. The appalling aristocracy of the front rows distracted the most democratic heads in the company. We forgot our parts, we lost our cues when the audience omitted to applaud in the right places. Nobody was the wiser. Having only the small part of a schoolgirl in "Mliss," I passed most of the time at the wings, taking notes with Beattie Graves.

"See our friend Gifford half a dozen rows back?" he whispered. "You look startled, Miss Adams. Don't you know he's been amusing himself this long time at Moonstone Court, near here? A fast lot!" and he winked unutterable things; "but furious fun goes on there, I'm told. Lots of daughters, no money, and Lady Moonstone making a dead set at him for the eldest. Eight-and-twenty, plain, and rather blue. See him between her—she's in mauve—and the mother with a face like a parrot. Can a sensible man so lose his head that the mere tinkling in his ears of an empty title——"

The immediate danger was to Mr. Graves' head, so intent on Mr. Gifford's foibles that he needed twice reminding they were waiting for him on the stage. But he was soon back at my side, taking stock of the spectators afresh.

"Who is the old mummy in decorations beside Lady Mabel?" he asked. "They look like my favourite etching at home out of the 'Dance of Death,' the skeleton whispering to the beauty in the ball-room."

So they did, except that the skeleton, a distinguished foreign diplomatist, had an air of smooth enjoyment of life which made him the cheerful object of the two. Lady Mabel's demeanour to-night puzzled me again. She was outwardly self-possessed, joining with characteristic animation in her neighbour's comments. Only once, when the play had reached its climax and whisperings ceased, and Mliss and her sorrows commanded the attention of the most careless, I saw her, as the tension of feeling herself under observation relaxed, sink into herself, and her gaze, suddenly abstracted, showed that her mind was playing truant. No one else was watching her, to remark it. As for Mr. Pemberton, he was taken up with his arduous efforts to fulfil his duty at once

to the actors who had given their services, and to the audience who had given their money, anxious too to spare the Duchess every possible fatigue. No great social exertion, I understood, but was attended with risk to her; yet it was a risk the cheerful invalid insisted on running now and then.

I think everybody was secretly glad when the play was over. Music may promote conversation; acting must check it. The din of tongues burst forth freely at once. Now the majority of the audience flocked into the front hall, to be taken off by their carriages, a number of the personal friends of the family remaining to supper, which was immediately announced. I saw Lady Mabel go in on the mummy's arm, Mr. Gifford escorting Lady Moonstone's thoughtful, rather sad-looking eldest daughter. Our turn came later. By the time we had changed our stage-dresses Mr. Pemberton was free to come and offer his arm, with scrupulous courtesy, to Miss Hope, I following with Beattie Graves, who implored me not to desert him, miserable married man though he was, for that coxcomb Davenant—constrained to pair off with Annie, to their mutual discontent.

"I like to see Charlotte doing the *grande dame*," whispered Graves. "Observe her air as she swept by! By Jove, you'd think she'd been born in a castle of her own. I wager she's perishing for a cigarette and some porter. I am, I know. Now what can I get you?" shaking his head over the refreshments, chiefly confectionery, in the dining-room. "Fluff and froth—fairies' food! Is an Englishman expected to sustain his strength on kickshaws?"

Short was our stay, for the crowd—the same that had granted us but a broken attention on the stage—here set together to stare us out of countenance. "Madam, I am *not* the Two-Headed Nightingale," Mr. Graves kept muttering to an old lady whose spectacled eyes never left him, till his temper appeared to be going, and I got him away, telling him he would certainly insult somebody of consequence if he stayed.

"Very like," he admitted as we escaped into the ante-room. "And now to profit by the situation, for I mean to. Aid and abet me, Miss Adams. You've been here some time already, and must know your way about. I never was in a dukery before; I probably never shall be again. Show me over. 'Copy' for a paper in the *Era* almanack, 'Theatricals at Dene Abbey.' That's what I'm thinking. I'll take the front hall here to begin with."

All the ground-floor rooms except those in our wing were thrown open, so there seemed no objection to humouring his whim.

"Not that way," I cautioned him, as he made for a door opposite. "It leads to the kitchen stairs."

"Does it? I'd like to take it, then," he said, beginning his jottings. "Big fireplace—dogs—deer's horns—umbrella-stand,"

like a valuer making an inventory. We explored, unmolested, morning-room, Japanese-room, drawing-room, and ante-rooms various, concluding with the empty library, closed by folding doors at one end. "What's behind?" said he.

"I think it's the chapel," I replied.

"Chapel? I must bring in the chapel." The doors yielded to his hand, and we passed through. It was pitch dark beyond, and he began fumbling for a light, when faint voices struck on our ears.

"Am I anticipated?" he whispered. "Davenant—confound him!—taking notes for a rival article? Hush! Hark! the ghosts!"

The voices were not in the chapel, but came through the half-open door of a recess communicating with a passage. All I saw was the white sweep of a lady's train; all I heard was the sound of her companion's voice saying low, but with a strange, troubled emphasis:

"You know you command me absolutely."

"Gifford!" Graves whispered sharply in my ear. "Did you hear? The devil! Why, that fellow's a perfect Don Juan. I must find out who 'you' is. What's more, I've my suspicions."

"You must not," said I. Then, perceiving at once it was vain to reason with my incorrigible companion, I said, raising my voice, "Come back into the library for a candle, Mr. Graves. I dislike the dark."

The ghosts were already gone. There were other exits from the passage leading to the reception-rooms, and we heard the door of one of these open and shut.

"What a little spoil-sport you are!" muttered my comrade crossly.

"It's not the part of a gentleman to play the spy," I told him severely.

"I'm not a gentleman," he retorted curtly.

"Then I beg your pardon," said I, "for having known you so long without finding it out."

At this he laughed, made peace in the library, and before we said good-night in the hall he was praying me to promise to be his partner again to-morrow night for the grand finish. After the performance there was to be a display of fireworks and illuminations at the old abbey ruins, got up by the tenants, which we should all drive over to see.

"I've a trap here," said he. "Will you come?"

"With pleasure," said I.

"No, with me." On second thoughts he added, "Only it's a long time since I drove. I'm short-sighted, and I wouldn't upset you for worlds. It's not that I'm afraid, except of charging the coachmen here at the front door. What should you say to coming round to meet me at the little shrubbery gate, down the drive? It will be better."

"Much better," I laughingly agreed with him.

The company had now dispersed; Mr. Graves went on his way to smoke somewhere, I on mine with Miss Hope and Annie to our sleeping-quarters. Charlotte sent me back into the White Hall for a fan she had left there. At the foot of the stairs Lady Mabel brushed past without seeing me. She might have been walking in her sleep. Her eyes were dilated; their expression was fixed and distant. I stood stock still, feeling cold and scared, as if I had seen the White Lady of the legend, whose appearance is the omen of a death in the household; or as if, in the thick of the fun and the frolic, I had read the handwriting on the wall foretelling the downfall of Dene Abbey.

Next morning I saw her again. We were shockingly late; but at noon, having to rehearse a scene with Davenant, I was passing the morning-room on my way to the hall, when Lady Mabel came out. I was thinking of her, as was natural, and looked at her with half-pitying, half-fascinated interest. She greeted me with a smile and a cheerful good-morning that discomfited me.

"Is all going on well?" she inquired, in her soft sweet voice.

"Pretty well," I replied mechanically, more and more perplexed.

"Has Juliet's balcony been set right?"

"Yes, it has been lowered three feet."

"I hope everything will go as smoothly and beautifully as last night."

"I hope so," I echoed, lost in wonder. What, she could stand there and smile, and talk of stage scenery, and entertain her friends, and give orders to the servants as usual, knowing all the while that her domestic peace was broken up—its show a mere pretence! And we professionals call ourselves actresses! Nay. I said to myself I had been dreaming, as she lingered talking for a few moments.

Very soon Mr. Pemberton, whose knack of interrupting us showed his distinct objection to seeing his wife discoursing with innocent me, followed her out of the morning-room.

"Mabel," he said, "you don't look very well, and I am afraid last night has been too much for you. You must be sure to take some hours' rest this afternoon."

"I am quite well," she answered coldly and constrainedly. "I am going to drive into Broadgate with the Hohendorffs."

"You had far better not," he expostulated. "You will be tired out."

"It is something new," she returned with a forced laugh, "to hear you talking of my ailments as if they positively existed. You say I can imagine myself into being ill in reality—perhaps, then, I can imagine myself into being well and strong in reality."

"I doubt if imagination would prove quite as efficient in the one case as in the other," he said, not ill-humouredly; but as she

was moving away he was so unlucky as to add uneasily, "If you knock yourself up you will be sure to have a headache, and be unable to come down to dinner."

"Ah, there's the cause of this sudden solicitude," I heard her say with light irony as I passed on. "Of course you are anxious lest I should make myself 'conspicuous by my absence' at the dinner-party. Do not be afraid. To-night, at all events, I will not fail to appear in my place at our table."

If I expected Mr. Pemberton to be up in arms at this extraordinary speech and the tone of it, I was undeceived. He let it pass with the dead calm of one who has long made up his mind to re-ent no thrusts openly, having found taking no notice the only way to stop scenes about nothing at all, and that the best certainty of preserving his temper is in shutting his ears to what is said on purpose to provoke it. But the show of indifference maddened her just then, I could see. Would he not see it, speak, and set her right?

No, he saw nothing before him but his wife in one of those characteristic fits of in consequence he had invariably found become graver in proportion to the attention they succeeded in exciting.

The next minute I was on the stage, rehearsing the part of Anne Carew, the heroic wife, on whose devotion to her husband, Jasper, the plot hinges.

Jasper Carew, as all playgoers know, is hunted as a rebel by Judge Jeffreys' troops, under the ferocious Colonel Kirke. He is reported dead, being really concealed in a cupboard in his own house, whilst his wife, to avert suspicion, has to pretend to forward the addresses of the odious colonel, who has fallen in love with her. Ah! if the Pembertons had lived in those stirring days their union might have remained a loving one. Fancy the excitement of hiding your husband in a cupboard to save his life, at the risk of your both being burnt alive if it were discovered you were protecting his safety! It would prevent Lady Mabel from finding conjugal life dull, and Mr. Pemberton from worrying her about trifles, besides calling out such heroic qualities as each might possess. Times are changed, and our modern wife-heroines, our Frou-frous and Odettes, run off with their lovers to show their contempt for the world and society. But Lady Mabel, so young and so winning—she heartless, she depraved, and ready, at the least call, to forget her duties and get into mischief's way? It was a dreadful riddle I preferred to put out of my head.

During the short afternoon we actors, left to ourselves, lolled about the garden; time for me to study the character I was going to present. Charlotte had always praised my acting in this part. I had played it often enough to feel at home in it, and might hope not to fall below the mark to-night.

It was the opening piece. The audience presented mostly the same faces as yesterday, but the novelty of the thing having worn off, they paid the actors rather more attention. My rôle possessed me to-night; it was no matter to me if Davenant, trying to be sublime, was sometimes ludicrous, or that during our tenderest *tête-à-tête* he was unmistakably forgetful of his Anne—of everything but the sound of his own voice. I imagined myself the wife, the *soi-disant* widow, committed to the frightful task of keeping her husband's mortal enemy at bay by pretending to encourage his detested courtship, and between-whiles snatching moments of superlative bliss in the company of her best-beloved. I succeeded in forgetting myself in the part completely, and felt that night I was acting—and for the first time, strange though it may sound. But the stage-emotion that makes the actress had all but betrayed me into fatal disgrace. For at that most critical point, when to save Anne from the kiss claimed by her villainous suitor, Jasper starts from his hiding-place ready to rush forward, and all seems lost, but Anne, with a supreme effort of presence of mind, succeeds by a sudden ruse in averting both dangers, laughingly repelling Kirke and forcing him, still unsuspecting, out of the room and locks the door, I, in my incautious flurry, tripped and fell, partially saving myself by grasping the door-handle. A sharp pain in my ankle told me I was hurt; a simultaneous burst of applause that the mishap had passed for an effective stroke of stage business. Excitement took away the pain quickly; inspired by success I acted on, nothing daunted, to the happy end, when, though the fugitive is discovered, Kirke is cheated of his prey, and husband and wife are allowed to join hands again in peace and safety.

I received such a share of applause as half turned my head. The cheers from a gallery reserved for the servants of the family were downright enthusiastic. Whether a part of this warm approval was bestowed on the virtue and heroism of Anne Carew rather than on the talent of Elizabeth Adams, I won't stop to inquire; but the villain Kirke, well acted by a useful member of Mr. Slater's company, I was surprised to see come in for no acknowledgment whatever of the same kind.

The Shakesperian scene followed, and whilst waiting for it at the wings I ran my eye over the audience. Mr. Gifford was not among them to-night. Beattie Graves, who had been over to Broadgate and met him there, had understood from him that he had left Moonstone Court and was on his way back to town. Within a few yards of me, among the dowagers and *pères nobles*, sat Lady Mabel. I had seen her before the curtain rose, looking to-night as if she had been turned to stone. Her eyes seemed to have grown larger, but expressionless; her lips were pale, her features rigid, and the outward immobility, though preserved without apparent effort on her part, was as unnatural

as that of one who has just passed through some awful extremity.

It haunted me through the play. Would nobody warn Mr. Pemberton of what now seemed to me plain—that his wife was losing her reason? He would not have listened. The remarkable thing would have been if for once she had consented to conduct herself like other persons, or even rationally. But for a chance clue I had picked up, should I have been so keensighted?

I don't know what Mr. Pemberton thought of Miss Hope's Romeo, but I thought it silenced criticism. Yet all the while I was half wishing, for Lady Mabel's sake, the play had never been written. Just that passionate scene between two lovers whose lives are parted, but who, undefined, will love on and on, though they die for it. Instead of Annie in embroidered satin and a studied attitude, mincing and ranting under the lime-light on the balcony, with many side glances at the spectators, I seemed to see Lady Mabel, as she sat there the other night, and now and then some line, inexpressively delivered, called up in odd contrast the unconscious pathos with which she had uttered it.

With that scene the entertainment virtually ended. A gay little epilogue, especially adapted for the occasion, lasted only a few minutes, then we hurried to our rooms to prepare for the drive. I was still overwrought with the excitement of acting. Still the image of Lady Mabel floated before my brain, with the strange look in her eyes it seemed no one else would see. Were her mother and her husband struck blind that they could remain as unconcerned as though all were well? After the impression I had received I felt I should hardly be surprised to hear of her flinging herself into the pond, or taking laudanum, or giving whatever crowning proof might be wanting of an unsound mind.

I hurried on a black silk dress, *par-dessus* and hood. There was a crush of people in the front hall, and of carriages in the drive. A prudent part of Mr. Graves' to arrange to pick me up at a point a little way off, which I could reach quietly by going round through the garden. It wanted a quarter of an hour to the time appointed, but by the lamps of a passing carriage I caught a glimpse from my window of the dog-cart standing by the shrubbery gate. Feeling rather like a thief, I slipped through back landings to the short shut-off passage leading to the glass garden door. Some one was there before me, stooping to raise the sash—some lady alone, with a dark cloak like mine thrown over her dress disguising her person. She turned sharply at the sound of my approach, and the hood fell from her head as she lifted it. It was Lady Mabel.

She started nervously, in extreme excitement, but upon seeing who it was, her countenance lightened with a quick flash of

something almost like gladness. To my broken explanations—for a numbing surprise taking hold of me froze my say on my lips—she paid no heed. Her eyes were on my face, and searched it with sudden eager entreaty, as she said in an insinuating tone of appeal:

“Do you want to be my friend?”

“If that could be,” I answered doubtfully, as I felt.

With the same fixed and beseeching gaze she continued, pressing a letter from her hand into mine:

“Will you take this note and deliver it into the hands of the person it is for, who is there at the shrubbery gate? You know him. It is Mr. Francis Gifford.”

Startled, stupefied, I drew back, saying, “Lady Mabel, it is not a friend’s part you are asking me to play.”

She clasped her hands together, perplexed, distracted; then, to my utter amazement, she handed me her letter open, saying, “Read it, please.”

I declined; she insisted, adding, “You can refuse to give it, afterwards.”

Against my will I read—a few lines only, hurriedly traced, then glanced from them to her, stunned by a sense of a terrible possibility—a gleam that came and went like a lightning flash—revealing an old bad story of a pretty woman’s worthlessness, folly, projected flight. Then all was darkness, groping, and guesses. Her calm now bewildered me, yet conveyed a deeper sense of trouble than her previous agitation; then her voice, steadier than mine, brought me to myself.

“If you will not go,” she said, “I must.”

“No,” I said quickly, instinctively; time to think, there was none. “You can go back. I consent.”

With her letter in my hand I sped down the steps into the dusky garden, along the broad gravel walk, then up a side path, through a door in the brick wall into a narrow footway running between dark shrubberies, closed at the end by a little iron gate opening into the drive.

Francis Gifford, as Lady Mabel had said, was standing beside the carriage I had mistaken for that of my escort. It was too dark for him to see clearly who was coming to meet him till I was close by.

“Lady Mabel Pemberton has charged me to give you this note,” I said.

I was out of breath with walking fast, and had twisted my ankle again; the pain forced me to stand there, leaning against the railing.

He glanced through the contents in an instant, controlling all signs of emotion or even surprise. Then an idea seemed to strike and confound him, met, as it were, by some desperate perplexity raised by this turn of affairs.

"How came you to be entrusted with this?" he asked quite quietly and naturally, but trying to read my face, I could see.

"I cannot tell you," said I, "for I have no idea why she chose me as messenger." And I turned to re-enter the shrubbery. He stopped me, keeping his hand on the gate.

"There is something more you can and will do for her yet," he said quickly, with quiet insistence. "Miss Adams, you must get into the carriage, and let me drive you to the lake and back."

A trick, to save appearances, check scandal, and throw dust in eyes put tardily on the alert. He scarcely waited for my refusal to add imperatively:

"Not when I tell you it is necessary?" Then, as I still held firm—with a complete shifting of his tone to one of grave persuasion, he urged, "If you have the least regard, or even pity, for some one who has trusted you to the point of putting herself absolutely into your power—if you are a generous girl—you will do this. It cannot affect you in any way, and it will save her unnecessary torment—that is all we have to think of just now."

Quick to seize and act upon the first symptom of wavering, he half-forced me to mount; I hardly knowing why I yielded, or whether I was doing right or wrong.

It was not ten minutes' drive to the lake, but I thought it a lifetime. My head throbbed in wild confusion, but the change from the heat and glare, the glitter and din of the show, to the cool air and darkness and stillness, the waving trees and broad green space out of doors, had a sobering effect. Along past the house, up the hill we drove, I more and more resenting his action in using me as a blind. He was right—I was only a little actress. The sight of us together could have no effect but one—to explain away into unimportance what needed to be explained.

I had never expected to open my lips during the drive. The few sentences that did pass were forced out by the oppression of awkward silence—more awkward for him than for me. It was he who broke it at last, saying:

"Remember that no blame, not of the slightest, attaches to her."

"No blame," I repeated half mechanically. "But I don't think I can understand you, Mr. Gifford."

He bit his lip, jerked the rein, and we shot down the hill. There were plenty of carriages in our wake, and a line of them before us, in the gloomy bit of road we were entering leading to the lake, now made him slacken our pace to a walk. He resumed:

"She is entirely alone and unhappy, with no one near her who comprehends her or in whom she can confide. You can understand that."

"Yes," I said. Those around her were mistaken in her; so much I had seen for myself.

We were nearing our goal. Files of carriages filled the road, skirting the water opposite the ruins. We heard the crackling of

the first rockets, let off to the cheers of the tenants. Several carriages had passed us; we must have been seen by more than one person; there was no further need or desire on my companion's part to court public scrutiny. Avoiding the throng, he turned the horse aside, and drew up on a bit of turf where the deep shadows of the trees screened us completely. A moment's breathing-time—the first—to look back, ask and realize what had happened. The sense of it, coming on him now with a shock and a jar, put him into a violent agitation of some kind, and forced out an audibly-dropped, almost fierce exclamation:

“What made her turn back?”

The fireworks crackled overhead; laughter, light jests, and “ohs” of delight broke from the sightseers on the road. I was thinking, gladly, that this time to-morrow, come what might, I should be far from Dene Abbey.

Presently he said uneasily:

“You will see her to-morrow, possibly to-night. Tell her——”

“Give me no message,” I prayed. “I could not take one, unless it should be that you will abide by the words of her letter.”

“Do you know what they mean?” he said disturbedly. “Leave her to what only yesterday she affirmed she could bear no longer? Not mind what becomes of her? As if that was possible! or she could mean it”

“If there is the least chance of her ever being happy again where she is,” I said, “can you not do as she asks—leave her to herself, to try?”

Again the sky glowed luridly overhead, and the arches of the ruins stood out in strange whiteness against the red glare.

“Well,” he said at length, “no need after all to tell her anything. For she knows.”

Fireworks, happily, cannot last long. Presently came a brilliant shower, whose magnificence marked it as the finale. But the press of carriages in the road prevented us from striking into it at once. Among those who passed without seeing us I noticed Miss Hope, with a gay party of actors, Mr. Pemberton, with a grave carriageful of Abbey guests.

At length we got off, and the short drive home was silent. Only, as we were nearing the house, he spoke, with a studied frankness:

“It was a very strange step on Lady Mabel's part to place her trust in you, Miss Adams, whom she scarcely knows; but it would be stranger still if you ever gave her reason to repent it.”

“Do not be afraid,” I said low. Then as we drew up at the shrubbery gate, it came into my mind to add:

“And I may tell her you will do as she asks, if that is her real and earnest wish?”

His answer was a look of surprise at my boldness, or my simplicity. Then he said shortly:

“You may tell her that.”

He helped me down. "There," he said. "Can you find your way now?"

I flew rather than ran back into the garden, and across the grass to the steps leading to the house entrance, which fortunately had been left unbolted. Once indoors, I breathed freely, and was hoping to reach my room unobserved, when in the corridor out of which it opened I met Mr. Pemberton. I passed without looking at him. My hand was on the lock of the sitting-room door, when he spoke my name in a tone which made me turn to him in momentary indignation, quickly forgotten now. With all his regard for decorum, he was no actor.

"Did you call me, Mr. Pemberton?" I inquired.

He hesitated, mortally perplexed, as indeed was I.

"Have you seen Lady Mabel?" he asked unemphatically. "Do you know where she is?"

"I do not," said I, passing into the empty sitting-room. I could not shut the door in his face. But I knew my appearance was wild and disordered, my manner guilty and awkward.

"Are you sure?" he said, following me into the room, voice and manner plainly signifying his disbelief in my word.

"I saw her last immediately after the play," said I; "and if I may be permitted to say so, Mr. Pemberton, I think she needs taking care of. She was looking terribly ill."

"Ill?" he echoed mechanically, as if confounded by such incredible dissimulation. Some hint had reached him, and with it some intimation that she and I were in collusion. A violent twinge in my ankle forced me to sit down. He stood irresolute; but my countenance had betrayed some knowledge.

"You had better speak truth," he said with stern contempt. "She is not here, and you know it."

"Grant that there you are mistaken."

As I spoke, my change of countenance made him turn to look round. Lady Mabel was standing behind him in the doorway. She had entered whilst he was speaking; she was ashy pale, and with the same hollow rings round her eyes, but their expression was free and natural again. She was still in her evening dress and diamonds.

She gave her husband one short look, but without stopping to take further notice of his presence she addressed herself to me, saying in a steady, childlike voice:

"Miss Adams, I have come to ask for your help. My mother is not at all well to-night; I am going to sit up with her myself, and want you to stay for a few hours in the next room. The maid is new, and worse than useless, and the servants are all in confusion. Could you come at once?"

"I am ready," I said, rising instantly. She led the way. Mr. Pemberton made a movement, as if to follow, or prevent our going. She half-turned, saying:

"Do not come. She is nervous and excited and will bear nobody in the room but me. The housekeeper has gone to bed with a sick headache. Miss Adams shall sit in the dressing-room, and can summon you or the servants should it be necessary to send for the doctor. But she will not hear of it, and for the present we know what to do."

He made no further objection, leaving us in the passage leading to the Duchess's apartments.

In a few hurried words Lady Mabel told me how immediately after I left her she had been met by the maid, flying in a panic to announce that the Duchess, who, as previously arranged, had retired immediately after the theatricals, was alarmingly ill. Hastening upstairs with her she found the invalid in a feverish, suffering state, aggravated by the nervous inefficiency of her attendants, whom the excitement of the *fête* and fright combined had utterly demoralized. "Then I thought of you," she said, "and came to fetch you at once."

CHAPTER XIV.

STRANDED.

UNTIL then "the Duchess" had barely been more to me than a social expression. True I had seen her, spoken with her, and been pleasantly impressed, as was everybody, high and low, by her rare amiability and animation. Something of her daughter's lively and sensitive temperament, without any of its extravagance. Full of nervous energy, of interest in all that was going on under the sun, of enjoyment of society, and busy besides with the ten thousand good works she always had in hand, she appeared to forget, till she sometimes led others to forget in reality, how frail was her hold upon life. A constitutional delicacy of the chest had brought on a serious illness some years before, from which real recovery was out of the question, and since which the least aggravation of the disorder, such as threatened now, might bring positive danger. She seemed extraordinarily susceptible, and the fidgety officiousness of two frightened ladies' maids worried her perceptibly. Lady Mabel sent them out of sight and hearing, and having satisfied herself that my presence in the room was more agreeable to the invalid, and my services accepted—as really sick people accept quietly anything that alleviates their condition—begged me to stay. Her own tact and nursing skill were astonishing. She knew the ground, and her voice and touch exercised a soothing and mesmeric effect. All the needful remedies were at hand, there was plenty to do, and we were on our feet until six in the morning, when by degrees our patient became quieter and slept. Then only I persuaded Lady Mabel, who was thoroughly

exhausted, to lie down in the dressing-room, promising to wake her at the least sign of change.

Towards nine o'clock she awoke of herself suddenly, half-started up with a scared look round and a wild, tell-tale exclamation barely checked, as she saw me sitting by her side. Her fingers closed on her hand tightly, a nervous shock ran through her frame, and she sank back shivering, as with cold or fear. Then, as her senses cleared, she tried to put a question, but her lips trembled so that she could not speak.

"She is still asleep," I said. "I trust the danger is passing away. The housekeeper is there, and will tell us when she wakes."

"How selfish I am," she murmured, raising her eyes to mine. "You look pale yourself; you must be tired."

"Not much." I was feeling no fatigue, only, as I spoke, such an excruciating spasm in my ankle as drove me to add, "But I twisted my foot whilst acting last night, and I think I had better go and bathe it by-and-by, if there is nothing more I can do."

Here the housekeeper tapped at the door to announce that the Duchess was awake, and asking for us both.

She declared herself better, thanked me smilingly for my help and attention, and would have detained me now had not her daughter represented that I alone of her nurses had taken not a moment's rest, and undergone the double exertion of acting and sitting up. At last I was set free to go and try and remove the traces of a sleepless night. I was growing alarmed about my foot, which had been paining horribly and was beginning to swell. I got back to my room with difficulty, and fell on the sofa in agonies. I struggled to reach the bell; the wire was broken. I called to Miss Hope, to Annie, but they had gone off to breakfast. There seemed nothing for it but to wait until I was found. Half an hour later Charlotte, marching into our sitting-room by one door, confronted me painfully struggling in by the other, nerved to a last effort by desperation at finding matters getting worse every minute.

"Why, you poor lame duck!" she exclaimed in commiseration. "What's amiss?"

I told her. The facts spoke for themselves. My ankle was mountainously swelled. She set bells ringing, servants flying, and in due time the doctor, who had just been visiting the Duchess, came to see and report on my case.

He looked grave; said it might be a fracture; but that there was no telling till the inflammation, now fast increasing, had abated, pronounced me in a highly feverish condition, and positively forbade me to move.

My despair was absolute, and aggravated by dreadful physical discomfort. Surely a more exasperating mischance never befell innocent young person. A fixtured in a strange house, lying there

on the sofa helpless and wretched, with aching foot bandaged like a mummy, and Charlotte trapesing about in boisterous spirits, bringing me breakfast I could not eat, inventing absurd consolations I thought cruel, and laughing, actually laughing at my distress and dismay each time she looked in in the intervals of her packing up, which was going on briskly. The company were off to Broadgate that morning, to start thence on their several ways.

"Now I call this a special providence," she asserted, coming at last, her preparations concluded, to seat herself by my side.

"If you knew how horribly it hurts!" I gasped, at a fresh paroxysm.

"Here you are housed for some days at least," she went on imperturbably. "Slater's due in London this very night—that I know. They're kind people here, and won't turn you out till you're cured."

"But what's to become of me, cured?" I asked dolefully.

"Don't worry. Write to me in Edinburgh. I've a notion. Have you written what you had to write to Mr. Slater? Yes. Well, I'm going to write you a letter of recommendation to her Grace."

"Don't chaff," I retorted fractiously.

"I'm in earnest," she said laughing, as she left the room.

I could not guess what she meant, and was feeling too ill to care any more what became of me. Before starting, the "company" looked in to wish me good-bye and condole with me on my mishap. I could have cried to see them departing, leaving me behind. It was hard thus to lose sight of my comrades—it might be for ever, so far as I could see.

"So this is why you played me false last night," remarked Beattie Graves. "I waited and waited till patience expired——"

"And nobody came," said I, thankful no further questions were asked.

"I was too late for the fireworks, and I swore vengeance; but I forgive you now, and hope you'll get well quickly."

"I wouldn't hurry if I were you," said Annie significantly. "You'll have a good time here. If I'd thought of it I'd have started a sprain myself."

"Do you know, I quite envy you," Davenant confessed. "Dene Abbey is a perfectly charming place—only less charming than the people. I would give anything to be laid up here for a month. Such luck only happens in books or to ladies."

"Oh, to change places and ankles with you!" I thought in reply. Vain desire! Off went each actor, on his ass or otherwise, safe, sound, and gay as grasshoppers; and there was I, thanks in the main to Lady Mabel's vagaries, a writhing, miserable incumbent, possibly lamed for life, said imagination, lying there at

the mercy of pert housemaids, and without even the satisfaction of knowing what was going on in the Abbey. Every time a door slammed I fancied it was Mr. Pemberton's wife leaving her home, or Mr. Pemberton going to exchange pistol-shots with Francis Gifford in the park. For wild disorder my visions that night might have matched those of Lady Mabel or any other conscience-stricken dreamer of dreams.

For the next two days I was in such pain that I was utterly indifferent to the existence of a world beyond my ankle. There was little to be done. "Nothing for it but patience," philosophized Mrs. Brown, the housekeeper, a motherly old body who took to me because I was an orphan, and the image, she declared, of her daughter in Tasmania. (I hoped, from the daguerreotype she showed me, that this was merely her way of accounting for her kindly solicitude.) Lady Mabel had given orders I should be well looked after, which Mrs. Brown undertook to see carried out. She had no liking for play-actresses, she told me plainly; but she had somehow mixed me up with that paragon, Anne Carew; and thanks to the noble domestic virtues I had displayed in that character, I had won the good woman's regard, as a "real decent body, so different to that Miss Hope—a wild, ragged slip of an Indian girl—such a she-savage as I never thought to live to see inside the walls of Dene Abbey."

The second evening she came to sit with me and brought her knitting, was sure I should be better for a little company; she herself loved nothing better than a little chat—in other words, a good gossip—and with a listener to whom her reminiscences (she had been all her life in the service of Lady Mabel's mother) were new.

The invalid's condition, I learnt from her, was still somewhat critical. Lady Mabel would not leave her night or day, never seemed tired, snatched what rest she could in the dressing-room. There was really no need now, Mrs. Brown observed, as the new attendant was getting her hand in, and had proved a fairly capable person after all; but Lady Mabel never spared herself when her mother was ill, and could do wonders in the way of persuasion and management. It was unlucky it should have happened just now, when there was a strange maid and no "companion" at all. But oh, the last companion! What a two years' nuisance, and nothing more, she had been! But the dear Duchess was so kind-hearted, so averse to parting with her dependants, for they all became so attached to her that it broke their hearts to quit, and in this case gave rise to such a moving scene that her Grace declared she never would give this particular dependant a successor, for fear of having to send her away. That was all very well so long as Lady Mabel was with her, but Mr. Pemberton made a point of living on his Irish estate as much as possible, and was in a hurry to return after an unusually protracted absence; though why any gentleman

should choose to go just to be shot at, Mrs. Brown, for her part, could not conceive.

On the third day I was much better. The fever had disappeared; the ankle was resuming its normal proportions, and the doctor gave the comforting assurance that no bone was broken. The limb was badly strained, but to-morrow he would be able to bandage it so that I could walk.

Walk, where? Into my grave? asks Hamlet. Back to Mr. Slater? I might have inquired. Not that I repented my decision. A thousand times, no. But how unlike, methought, is life to a novel in those love-passages with which novels chiefly concern themselves. Or was it only because I was twenty, and should I, grown older and wiser, be ready to go to the altar with a Tom Dulley or a Shirley Slater? That was a poor-spirited conclusion I really couldn't admit for a moment. The likelihood was that love and marriage meant to pass me by altogether. For I had never been in love—never; not with Tom Dulley, or Shirley Slater, or Edwin Davenant; nor yet with another.

Ah, Mr. James Romney, where, I wonder, are you now, and how filling your time? Passed, and gazetted, and perhaps with your regiment in India, you are smoking your cheroot at Maderabad, or tiger-shooting, or polo-playing, or whatever the favourite sport is. Do you ever think of Talaton sands, and the ley, and the words we spoke as the boat stood still among the reeds, and the seagulls and skylarks soared overhead? Or if you recall it, is it not as a good story to tell your messmates how, once upon a time, for a joke, you joined a theatrical troupe? Any pretty girls among them? Oh, aye, one very pretty girl in particular—and you smile volumes. No need to go back to that, to let them know what you can do in the way of flirtation. A young man must have his fling, and Maderabad's a lively station, and you're in the set which is noisy and fast; and there's Miss Violet Pringle, who's no prude, and whose ways make her boldest admirers—among whom you are counted—stare sometimes; and Mrs. Nixie, the beauty, who likes a gang of cavaliers in her train, and has singled you out, though the youngest, for a notice that makes your seniors jealous. So the merry years go by, now in India, now in England, till you tire of it, and time comes for settling down. Turn the lock on the past, and another door opens. Trust your family to find you a bride to your liking and theirs. It's little Gracie Hardcash, the rich banker's daughter—youth and innocence just out of the school-room—quite ready to be wooed and won. No occasion for her to know everything about Miss Violet or Mrs. Nixie; and perhaps if she did she would not mind. She jealous? You can never seriously have cared for those people, or for any one, or you would not be proposing to her now. So you marry, and live happily ever after.

At which imaginary conclusion I melted suddenly into tears. Almost at that moment somebody knocked, and Lady Mabel entered softly. I blushed, much ashamed, but she did not even perceive that I had been crying.

She came, seated herself by the sofa, and took my hand. Her touch was cold and numb. From her expression I saw that something grave had happened, yet when she spoke her voice startled me by its unaffected tranquillity.

"For me," she said, "the worst is over now."

I gazed at her, uncertain and uneasy; my first thoughts had run to the invalid. "Your mother?" I asked anxiously; "she is not worse?"

"No, no, she is much better; she is recovering," she replied hastily, then added impassively as at first, "I am speaking of myself, and of—John."

"What is it that you mean?" I asked.

"I mean that he has spoken out, and so have I," she said with some return of her usual vivacity. "My path was clear at last. I have done with secrecy, and there is relief in that. Pretence was stifling me; but now he knows all that he could possibly comprehend, and all that signifies to him. He leaves for Ireland to-night."

"Leaves you?" I exclaimed, mystified afresh.

"Yes," she went on with a nervous laugh. "It is strange, is it not, how things happen? But chance has forced on what could not after all have been put off many days."

"This morning he sent for me. His Irish agent has telegraphed to him what he considers very serious news. There have been disturbances for the first time in our neighbourhood, and he thinks his immediate return imperative to prevent the ill-feeling from affecting the district under his control. But first of all this explanation with me had to be gone through. Unimportant though I might be in myself, in what concerns his name—his own honour—there he is careful."

"Something had come to his knowledge, of my intention—how, I do not know, nor does it matter; I was not thinking of concealment then, and I spared him all questionings now. I owned everything, exactly as it was, for I wished him to know the whole truth—that I had made up my mind to leave his home and him, to unite my life with that of the man who loved me as I was—that the contempt of the world and society would be nothing to bear, compared to what I had endured of his harshness and neglect, that I only was responsible for the resolution that involved another, who for my sake would have dissuaded me from the step I forced on, and that accident only prevented my taking."

"No, no," I exclaimed; "some thought in you forbade it—held you back."

"I had tried to keep from thinking," she said; "you must not, when you have made up your mind not to look back, only forward; then you can be cruel; you are like a drowning person, all dumb in you but one purpose—to live; let those who must, go under. It was a little thing changed my intention and made me write." She paused, then added, with characteristic introspection, "I meant every word, and yet, when I met you by chance, I knew I must trust you to do for me what I wanted, that I could not have trusted myself."

"Don't think of that," I said quickly.

"It is of no consequence now," she said. "Do you think I should try to repel suppositions that were so amply well founded? I have done nothing I repent—said nothing I would unsay. And he has taken his decision, in which I entirely concur."

"And it is——"

"That we separate. He is going home—nominally to return for me when the country is quieter and I can leave my mother. But he will not come back—not to me."

Her voice had a ring of bitter triumph. It was as if in the power she found left her to sting she dreamt a sort of wild justice—her revenge for his previous indifference.

"I think he would have liked to have killed me," she continued with self-convincing vehemence. "Could anything but my death honourably release him from his bondage now? If I would be so obliging as to die! Ah, if one could die for the wishing!"

Her sadness was sincere, her case desperate, yet for her and for him the worst, methought, had only begun.

A wife who has made up her mind to leave you, who alters it at the eleventh hour, and is thus thrust back on your protection which she scorns, your authority which she resists, your society which she shuns, your forgiveness of which she will not hear—the present a deadlock, the past embittered, the future something you can scarce bring yourself to contemplate—how would Mr. John Pemberton conduct himself in such an emergency? and was Lady Mabel capable of the most distant idea of the extent of her revenge?

"Then it is decided?" I said presently.

"Everything is decided. I said I had one thing only to request—that the breach should not be made known until it is seen what turn my mother's illness is likely to take. The knowledge of our estrangement would distress her so much that in her present condition it might bring danger to her life."

"Do you mean that she does not know?"

"She knows nothing whatever. All her life she has been colour-blind where the dark colours are concerned; and I have always been cheerful when with her, to spare her whilst I could. I asked him to spare her the worst a little longer, as it was easy.

I said, 'The troubles on your estate will account to her for your remaining away; her illness for my remaining here to nurse her. Let me keep the truth from her as long as possible. To keep it for ever may not mean very long.'

"To this he agreed. It was too late for reproaches. His own course he had determined on. He regarded our union as broken. He would give me back my liberty, take the blame in the eyes of the world, but after the confession I had made of my sentiments, to prolong even the pretence of amicable relations was impossible, as by so doing he would seem to himself to countenance the disgrace I had owned myself ready to bring upon his name."

So the tale ended. She had broken lastingly with her husband; broken—for how long?—with her lover—she who was as little fitted to stand alone as the passion-flowers that trailed up the greenhouse. I had been pitying myself the moment before; I was thinking now if any woman in the world would care to change futures with rich, pretty, fortune-favoured Mabel Pemberton.

It was she who brought back my thoughts to the present by asking if I had not nearly recovered from my accident.

"Lady Mabel," I said, "I have now to thank you and the Duchess for your hospitality, and not to trespass upon it any further. The doctor says I may leave to-morrow."

"No, no," she said quickly; "you are to stay on. It is all settled. Miss Hope has written a long letter telling us all about you and your difficulties, and recommending you to my mother as companion."

"She has?" said I, much annoyed at what struck me as a practical joke.

"Please stay till you see how you like it," she said in the coaxing, caressing way in which she would ask for your head if she wanted it, and think it rather inhuman of you to decline.

But I only inquired what my duties would be.

"To read aloud chiefly, and write mamma's letters; she is forbidden to use her eyes much. She was delighted with the idea, for she has taken a very great fancy to you, and she is to have everything she likes, the doctor says. Will you stay?"

If I was not quite so delighted as Davenant would have been, I must own there was luck for me in this turn of affairs. Immediate difficulties were done away with; and I had caught some of the recklessness of my associates, and was learning not to distress myself about the lions in the path round the corner.

ON MARRIED WOMEN'S SURNAMES.

IT is becoming the fashion among married ladies in London to keep their maiden name in addition to their husband's surname. This practice has long been in vogue amongst actresses and other ladies who have made a reputation for themselves before marriage, the benefit of which they are unwilling to lose. The names of Mesdames Goldschmidt-Lind, Trebelli-Bettini, Lemmens-Sherrington and hosts of others will readily occur to every one as cases in point. But until lately the fashion was confined in England to actresses, singers, authoresses, and other ladies whose loss at marriage through the change of name would have been so substantial a pecuniary one that it might be estimated in thousands of pounds. It is only now that ladies in private life have begun to realize the fact that their own loss on changing their name and thus, to a great extent, losing their identity, is quite as real and quite as important to themselves as the actress's would be to her, although possibly no one would go so far as to say it had a monetary value. The loss of many old friends as well as of possible bonds of sympathy between herself and new acquaintances is the common result, to a bride, of the total suppression of the name by which she has been hitherto known. Who is to recognize the bosom friend of her school-days, her adored Araminta Cleveland or Belinda Moreville, under the prosaic disguise of "Mrs. Smith" or "Mrs. Jones?" One might be on the same steamer with her, or staying in the same hotel and be none the wiser. One might live next door to her for years in London, seeing her name constantly in the Blue Book or Court Guides, and yet never recognize her as the playmate of one's childish days. More painful still, she might possibly, should she die a rich and childless widow, wish to leave something handsome to her old schoolfellow, in default of other heirs; but, her old friend having taken to herself the name of Mrs. Brown, and thereby made the disguise doubly complete, both go down to their graves deprived of the friendship which might have solaced their declining years, the survivor being also deprived of the sad but nevertheless real consolation of being the other's residuary legatee.

When a girl marries it is usually only the favoured few who are present at the wedding breakfast who really manage to remember her new name and address. "Seeing is believing," and the personality of the bridegroom is borne in upon them by

the recollection of his face during the idiotic attempt at a speech which he makes, while his name is impressed at the same time on their memories by his health being drunk and by their seeing it engraved on cards, lockets, bracelets and various other wedding presents. But the rest of the bride's acquaintance, numbering, perhaps, many hundreds, are very hazy on the subject, and one often hears the question: "Let me see, what is Mary So-and-So's name now, and where does she live?" The answer to which generally occasions the rejoinder: "Dear me! we must have been quite close to her the other day; what a pity we did not know, we should have liked so much to go and see her." To many a warm heart the loss of such visits is an evil quite as great as the loss of money, or even greater, and hence the present movement on the part of married women. It certainly will have many advantages if it becomes general, not only to the ladies themselves, but to all their friends and acquaintances, especially if the double surname comes, in course of time, to be the distinguishing mark of a married woman; for, as it would form part of a lady's ordinary signature, which the title of Mrs. or Miss does not, many a correspondent would be relieved from the harassing doubt which now besets him as to whether he is to address his reply to Mrs., Miss, or Esq.

The point has been much discussed whether it is advisable for the husband or children to bear the double surname also. In the cases above quoted of celebrated singers the interchange of names is mutual between husband and wife. Doubtless this has been found advantageous by the husbands; for in addition to keeping their own names, with the lustre which already surrounded them, they acquired the further glory attaching to those of their wives. The same argument might be used with regard to men in private life, only substituting the word "friends" for that of "glory." There are many occasions in life when a man might be all the better for the help of his wife's old friends. Especially is this the case on his arriving in any new place, whether it be only for a flying visit or for a permanent residence. It is a proverbial saying that if a new family goes to settle in a country neighbourhood, the first year they are stared at, the second year people ask each other who they are, and the third year some one offers them a hymn-book in church. This is all very right and prudent, the simple cause of it being that no one knows anything substantial about them. The husband's name and profession (if any) are speedily known, but that is all and that is not enough. The wife's former name and profession (if any)—which are far more important from a social point of view, for on them depends chiefly the answer to the great question, "Ought we to visit her?"—are not known and not likely to be known, unless some lucky accident discloses them. Since it is not good manners for ladies to ask each other on a slight acquaintance, "What was your maiden name?" the

new-comer's position is at a dead-lock ; for the neighbours cannot be friends with her until they know "who she was," and cannot know who she was until they become intimate friends. So the ostracism goes on ; and all this while the husband and children suffer from it as well as herself, while possibly the mere mention of her own name would at once dispel all doubts and raise her up friends in all directions through some one's accidentally happening to know her "people."

Again, it is argued by some that it would be a great advantage to children through life if they bore their mother's name as well as their father's. If there is any use in a father's name—and most people, especially foundlings, will be inclined to admit that there is—surely there is equal use in the mother's. The children by its suppression are cut off from many hereditary acquaintances and friends who might be useful to them. In Spain the value of a name is rated so highly that a child of good birth bears not only that of its father and mother, but of its grandparents in addition. This, however, is carrying things to a cumbersome extreme, and it has the result of making the child's names so numerous that most of them are seldom used.

The whole thing, in fact, resolves itself into a question of convenience. In the case of the married woman, the slight inconvenience of signing herself by two surnames instead of one will be more than balanced by the advantages of the new arrangement, as soon as it becomes generally known that the first of any two surnames is likely to be the maiden name of a married woman. In the husband's case also the same may be said. But when we come to the children, complications at once arise.

Suppose a Mr. Smith has married a Miss Brown, and the pair, with their children, have gone since the marriage by the surname of Brown-Smith ; by what names are the young people to be known when they in their turn marry ? Are they to encumber themselves, like the Spaniards, with three surnames ? Some reply : "No ; let Mr. Brown-Smith, junior, when he marries Miss Green, drop his mother's name and take his wife's, the two thus becoming a pair of Green-Smiths ; while his sister Miss Brown-Smith, when she marries Mr. Robinson, also drops her mother's name and becomes Mrs. Smith-Robinson."

Others object to this plan on the ground that there is too much changing of names altogether in it ; also that if a man were married four or five times, he would have to change the first of his two surnames so often that his best friends would not know him, and even his creditors would have difficulty in identifying him. But, after all, his second surname would always remain the same and therefore he would still be more easily identified than a woman who has married once ; yet we never heard of any lady whose creditors did not manage to find her out, however often she

might change her name. It is not creditors, but friends, who are alienated by the old-fashioned plan; for creditors have ways and means of making inquiries which friends would not choose to employ.

Of course there are cases in which a lady is glad to drop her maiden name for ever, and would like to conceal from all the world the fact that she has ever borne it. Such feelings are natural and even praiseworthy if her patronymic was Scroggins or Buggins, or her father a dead ragpicker, the suppression of whose name can do him no harm, and may please her husband. But such cases are fortunately rare, and as the new fashion is not compulsory, no objection will be made by society at large to any lady's dropping her maiden name if she chooses. It is true that her doing so may possibly give rise to the suspicion that she has some good cause for being ashamed of it; and it is also true that ladies who have such cause would do better to change their names as soon as possible, without waiting for marriage, as thereby they will increase their chance of marrying well. A man is far more likely to propose to a girl whose name was Scroggins two years ago than to a girl whose name is Scroggins now. The fear of an advertisement in the first column of the *Times*, beginning "De Montmorency-Scroggins," will no longer loom horrent in his imagination and cause him to check himself whenever he is inclined to yield to his Amelia's fascinations—no! for she will have divested herself of it as soon as she came to years of discretion and will have taken instead some name so euphonious that he will be proud to tack it on in front of his own.

If a woman's name is so objectionable that it must be changed, it should not be done at the very moment of marriage, when so many other obstacles intervene between her and her old friends.

We ourselves see no real necessity for either the husband taking his wife's name, or the children their mother's. The only person greatly injured by the plan hitherto pursued is the wife herself. She has been deprived of the name to which by birth she is entitled and which she has borne for many years. That is not the case with her husband or her sons, who are allowed always to keep the names by which they have been known from childhood, though they may have had as many wives as Bluebeard; as for her daughters, the same rule that preserves her identity will preserve theirs.

Those husbands who may fear that they see in this movement a tendency to self-assertion on the part of the ladies may be reassured by reflecting that after all it is only proposed that a married woman, instead of being called by the name of one masculine owner, as hitherto, shall now be called by the names of two—her husband and father; so that the supremacy of the male sex will be more fully recognized than ever.

AN IDYLL.

SHE hangs above the swift mill-race
Her girlish tresses backward thrown,
Lips sweet as roses meadow-grown,
Blue eyes that light with Saxon grace :
And ponders on the frothing moan
Tossed by the river in its chase.

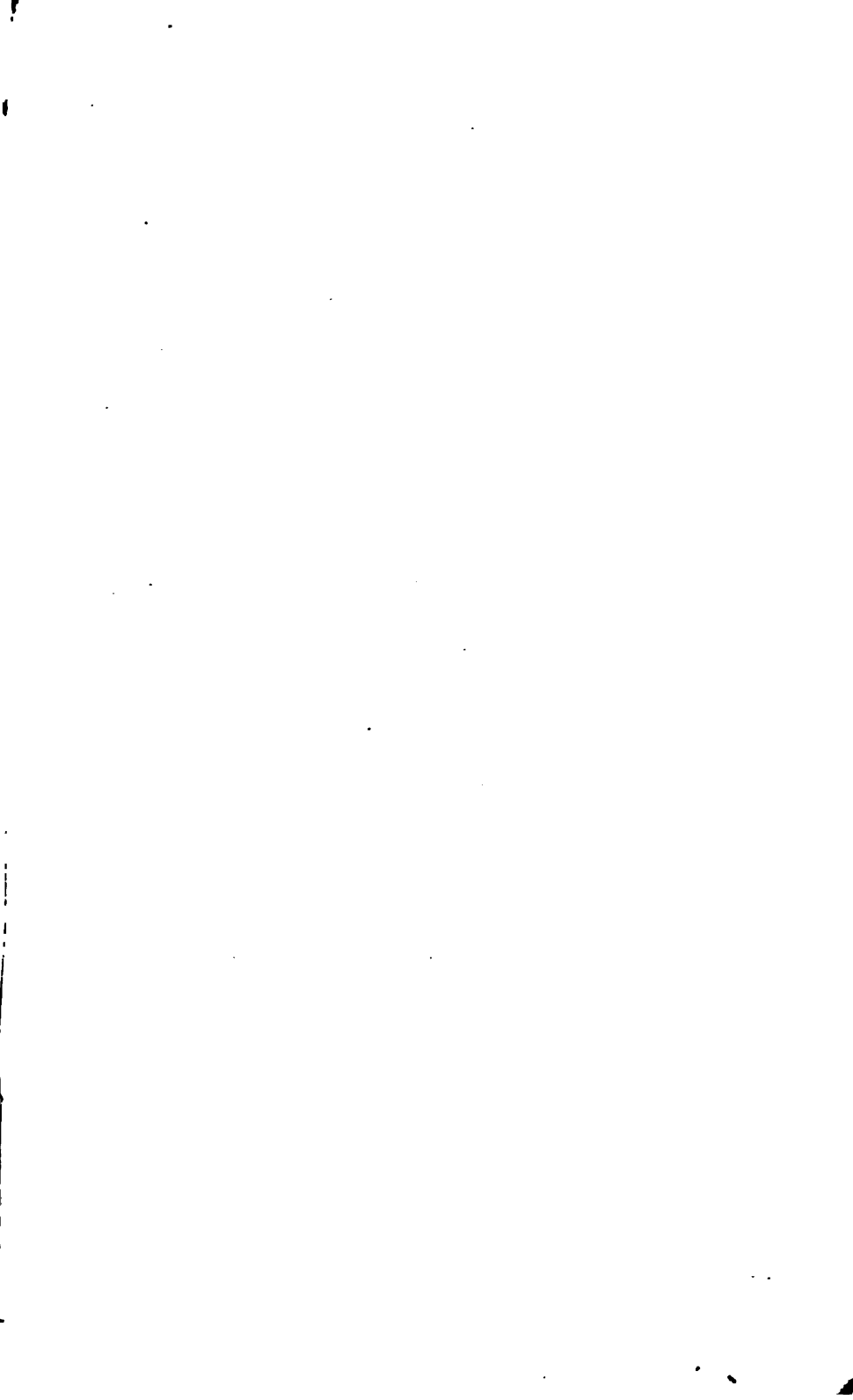
Vain bubbles! Leaping to the sky
And whirling in your flashing whirl,
And striving ever higher each pearl,
That fleecy urge your breath and sigh
And wreathe in alway idle curl,
And reach her only when you die.

And, loitering throstle, foolish peal
Of plaintive voices questioning,
Be sure it were a wicked thing
For thee to dare her kisses steal ;
An empty song, and wantoning
For lips that poorer hearts might heal.

And chanting softly till they call
Back schoolday dreams of hours from old,
About her head the breezes fold ;
Or gay laburnum blossoms fall
To print their faces to the mould
And ease their spirit of her thrall.

Cease, envy, cease my heart to fray !
Nor breeze nor blossom can remain :
Go, zephyr, join thy tardy train,
And wither, golden flower, away !
—And we, too, for our deeper pain
May win no freedom if we stay.

CLIFFORD KITCHIN.





OWING HIS PETS.



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LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE, 1886.

FORTUNES MADE IN BUSINESS.

No. XXXVI.

THE RICHARDSONS OF BESSBROOK.

SO much is heard of the unhappy side of Irish life that the untravelled Englishman is apt to regard the Sister Isle as a wilderness of want and discontent. There is a brighter side to the picture, however, and this is to be found in the province of Ulster, where, thanks to the growth and development of manufactures, the impress of prosperity and progress is visibly set upon the landscape. Ulster is the home of the flax plant, the grateful blue blossoms of which give such delight to the summer fields, affording a pleasant relief to the many acres of meadows carpeted with the snow-white linens which the factories have produced from this same plant. The manufacture of flax belongs almost to the beginning of things in Ireland, its introduction into the country being anterior to the period of historical record. There is record, however, and more than is altogether agreeable to read, of the many attempts which were made to curb or destroy this industry in the days when Ireland was governed solely in the interests of England, and without the least consideration for the welfare of the Irish people. That there have been such times in the past not even the bitterest opponent of recent legislative attempts to conciliate Ireland would think of denying. The first English representative to manifest any real sympathy with local enterprise, so far as the Irish linen trade was concerned, was Thomas Wentworth, Earl Strafford, who, when acting as the Viceroy of Charles I., adopted measures for the improvement of the cultivation of the flax plant. His predecessor, Sir Arthur Chichester, had boasted in his despatches to his royal master at Whitehall that he had laid waste the country from Carrickfergus to Cookstown, and destroyed all the rebels' corn, imagining, in his vain-glory, that this was the only way of upholding the honour of the British flag. Dublin Castle had a very different occupant in Lord

Strafford, who, from the first, saw the wisdom of encouraging the industrial arts amongst the people. The Viceroy made a tour through Ulster in the summer of 1637. This trip was fruitful of observation and beneficial in its results. Lord Strafford was attracted by the abundance of wild flax which he saw growing along the hill-sides near Ballycastle, and was not long in coming to the conclusion that under favourable cultivation the yielding powers of the soil might be greatly improved. With the view of putting his ideas to the best possible test he had a cargo of seed imported from Holland, and got over several experienced Dutch farmers to superintend and instruct the native cultivators in the art of growing the plant. The result was most gratifying, the next year's crop being a hundred times larger in quantity than the previous yield, while in quality it was greatly superior to any that had formerly been raised in the country. In this, as in other things, the Lord Deputy was "thorough," and in promoting the linen manufacture of Ireland spent in one year £10,000 of his own private fortune. At his own cost he had a hundred of the best linen looms brought over from Amsterdam, and these were distributed amongst the most worthy of the Irish weavers. Unpleasantness arose between the natives and the foreigners, the former being jealous of the latter in many instances, and unwilling to be taught by them; but Lord Strafford brought his influence to bear, and peace was ultimately restored, compensation being awarded to such as suffered loss from outrage.

While doing all in his power to advance the interests of the Irish linen trade, however, Lord Strafford was not unmindful of the trading interests of England, which he had been specially instructed to bear in view. The woollen manufacturers of Yorkshire were sore afraid that Ireland would prove a sturdy competitor with them, and, on their representations, the new Viceroy was ordered to spare no effort to keep down these manufactures in the country over which he had charge. Ireland was making great advances as a wool-growing country, and it was but natural that it should also wish to have a share of the more remunerative business connected with its manipulation. But the English clothiers would not hear of this for a moment; they would buy the Irish wool and work it up into fabrics themselves, but beyond this would hear of no concession whatever. Free Trade principles were altogether unknown in those days; each trading community did its best to conserve its own privileges, and prevented, as far as possible, any rival community acquiring equal rights. So, while Lord Deputy Strafford served Ireland as far as he could in encouraging the linen manufactures, in which England took but little part, he did not fail to mention in his despatches that he was careful to protect the English clothmakers from Irish rivalry. On the 25th of July, 1636, he wrote as follows to the King and Council: "I have taken good care to discourage all I could the

clothing trade, in regard that it would trench on the manufactures of England, for if the Irish should make their own wools, which they grow in great quantities, it would trench on the trade in England, and it might be feared they would beat us out of the market by underselling us, which they are well able to do. I have, however, set them to work in another way, that is, by improving the make of linen cloth; and as the women are all naturally bred to spinning, and the earth is apt for the bearing of flax, I will encourage the trade, which would be rather a benefit than otherwise to England." This was the policy which the ill-fated Strafford believed in, and which he faithfully strove to carry out; and thus the linen trade of Ulster came to be a powerful factor in the sum of Irish industry, and had the foundations of its prosperity substantially laid. Nor was this all that Lord Strafford did for this part of the island. He gave the first impetus to the shipping trade of the port of Belfast by purchasing from the corporation of Carrickfergus the prescriptive right of importing foreign products at one-third the amount of customs levied at other places of landing, and handed the same over to John Walker, to be held by him and his successors for the benefit of the town.

But the linen trade was the only industry that was given a chance in Ireland. Even Protestant King William, with all his professions of affection towards conquered Ireland, could not be got to look with favour upon the Irish woollen trade. The merchants and manufacturers of Bristol and Yorkshire represented to him, as their predecessors had done to the Stuarts, that this was the one thing to be crushed at all cost. When waited upon in regard to the matter William said: "Gentlemen, I shall do all in my power to promote the trade of England and to discourage the woollen manufactures of Ireland." Acts of Parliament were passed in fulfilment of this promise, and not only the woollen trade of Ireland but its shipping industry was placed under a ban.

The people of Ulster did not neglect the opportunities which were opened up to them, however, by the development of the linen trade, but year by year extended their operations, and were fortunate enough to secure the sympathy and assistance of the landed proprietors. During the period of the Civil War there was not much solid progress made, but after the Restoration the linen manufacture looked up, and from 1711 down to 1832 was placed under Government patronage. But the coming over from France of a number of Huguenot refugees, banished by the persecutions of Louis XIV., tended perhaps more than all else to establish the linen industry of Ulster on a firm foundation. The Belfast Board of Traders placed it on the records of their institution, in 1712, that "Louis Crommelin and the Huguenot colony had been greatly instrumental in improving and propagating the flaxen manufacture in the north of this kingdom, and the perfection to which the same is brought in that part of the

country has been greatly owing to the skill and industry of the said Crommelin." Other illustrious Huguenot names in connection with the Irish linen trade are those of the Goyers and the Duprés. But it was Louis Crommelin who made the chief mark among them, and by his high character and example showed how noble a thing industry was when rightly followed. A local historian, in paying a tribute to the memory of this famous pioneer, says: "The dignity which that enterprising man imparted to labour, and the halo which his example cast around physical exertion, had the best effect in raising the tone of popular feeling, as well among the patricians as among the peasants of the north of Ireland. This love of industry did much to break down the national prejudice in favour of idleness, and cast doubts on the social orthodoxy of the idea then so popular with the squirearchy that those alone who were able to live without employment had any rightful claim to the distinctive title of gentleman."

A change now came over the spirit of the dream, and the occupation of the linen weaver grew to be one of honour, and was attended by special privileges. The weaver was exempted from service on juries, and absolved from being forced into the army, except under very special circumstances. We are told that many of the old Irish squires, as well as the sons of landed chiefs, were taught to weave; and even as late as the present century there were numbers of such weavers in Ulster. With examples like these before them constantly, it would indeed have been strange if the lower classes had not shown themselves sensible of the importance of this industry. It was the custom of Lord Moira, during his long residence at Montalto, to give a dinner every Thursday for the cloth buyers who attended Ballynahinch market. His lordship used to preside at these dinners, and would listen to the trade gossip with as much interest as if he had been himself a dealer in linen. The Earl of Hillsborough and Lord Hertford exerted their influence also to the advantage of the Ulster trade. The latter, in 1765, when he filled the post of Irish Viceroy, obtained from the Linen Board many valuable concessions in favour of the merchants of the northern province, and was successful in procuring royal patronage for the Lisburn damask works. When once the favour of the Court had been bestowed upon the Irish damasks they speedily became in greater general demand. The royal table was covered with the best samples of these attractive goods, and the admiration they called forth resulted in extensive orders being sent from the leading aristocratic houses of the kingdom. Continental royalty likewise patronized the Lisburn damasks, and, one way and another, fame and profit accrued to the Irish manufacturers.

Something more than mere patronage was required, however, to build up a prosperous industry. Unless the highest mechanical efficiency could be associated with the commercial enterprise of

the people it would be impossible for the fabrics of Ulster to maintain their ground with the linens of the Continent. As a matter of fact, the looms of Holland were superior to those of Ireland, for many improvements had been made in the construction of these machines since the bringing over of those hundred looms from Amsterdam by Lord Strafford. As far as regarded the production of ordinary goods the Ulster manufacturers were well able to hold their own, but when it came to the weaving of fancy patterns they had to confess themselves very much behind their foreign competitors.

This was the condition of affairs in the Irish linen trade when two men came forward, James Quinn and James Bradshaw, and devoted their energies and talents to the bettering of these matters. Quinn introduced an extensive change of patterns, in which many beautiful designs were wrought out on the Lurgan damask looms, doing much to help the development of a higher taste among the damask weavers of Ulster. Bradshaw had his attention more particularly directed towards the diaper trade. He was the son of an independent landowner living in the neighbourhood of Newtownards, and had many opportunities of comparing the work that came from foreign looms with that which was produced in Ireland. It was humiliating to him as an Irishman and a patriot to have to admit that the Ulster product was wanting in some of the elements of attraction which were present in the Dutch fabrics. He mastered all the details of weaving machinery, and in doing so became aware of its more serious defects, although he did not possess sufficient of the inventive genius to be able to remedy them. Under these circumstances he concluded that the best thing he could do would be to master in some way the existing superiority of the Dutch looms.

To this end, one morning in 1728, he left his home in Ulster, and assuming the dress of an ordinary weaver, set out for Holland. Travelling facilities were but few at that period, so his progress in that direction was only slow. After journeying for several weeks, he found himself in Hamburg, where the diaper manufacture was carried on extensively as well as in Holland. He soon saw that there was as much knowledge to be picked up amongst the Germans as amongst the Dutch, and before long he obtained employment with one of the leading manufacturers in the city, neither his master nor his fellow-workmen imagining that he was anything more than a common weaver. Indeed, Bradshaw knew that if his plans were discovered he would soon be visited by summary vengeance; so for two years he continued his labour of love amongst the Hamburg weavers, living as they lived, and working as they worked, but observing everything, and completely acquainting himself with all the details of the construction of the looms. No department of the manufacture escaped his searching eye; not only did he master the various mechanical

features, but noticed all that was done in regard to the selection of yarns and the arrangements of styles. His earnings barely sufficed to keep him in food and clothes, but he made no demand upon those at home until at the end of two years, when he thought he had gained all the information he could. He then decided to return to Ireland and wrote to his friends for money, which they readily forwarded. Arriving in Newtownards in 1730, he at once set about the building of looms on the plan of those at Hamburg, personally superintending their construction and having them made in every particular on the Hamburg system. By this move the diaper trade of Ulster was put on an equal footing with that of the Continent, and an impulse was given to the Irish linen industry which, with the efforts that were put forth on its behalf in other quarters, served to place it in the front position, from which it has never since receded.

A movement for the erection of a White Linen Hall was set on foot in 1778 in Belfast. The Earl of Donegall was applied to for a site, and granted part of a grazing field, at a nominal rent, on the condition that it should be used for ever afterwards for the purposes set forth in the application. It was not until 1782, however, that any further step was taken towards carrying forward the project, when a meeting of bleachers and linen merchants was held, at which a sum of close upon £1,800 was subscribed, and the Linen Hall which still stands on the site granted by the Earl of Donegall was shortly afterwards erected.

The Linen Board, which was established for the promotion and advancement of the Irish linen trade, received a grant from the Government of £20,000 a year. There was a Flax Society also, which had a grant from the Imperial Treasury. This State aid, however, has been long discontinued, and now the trade, of which Belfast is the head-quarters, is altogether independent of aid of any kind except such as is furnished by its own enterprise and spirit. How far these qualities have carried this important industry may be gathered from the statistics which have been published. It is stated that in the province of Ulster there is not less than £50,000,000 invested in flax-spinning and power-loom weaving, three-fourths of that sum being credited to Belfast alone. There are over 20,000 looms and 900,000 spindles at work, giving direct employment to about 100,000 persons. The full capital embarked in the Ulster linen industry, estimating the sum required for the carrying on of the various operations as equal to that invested in mills, plant, &c., will amount to £100,000,000.

The linen trade of Ireland benefited, like the rest of the fabric-producing world, by the introduction of steam-power in the first half of the century; still, although the Ulster looms are of the most improved pattern, the hand-loom is yet largely employed in the production of the finer kinds of damasks, a better quality of

piece being obtained from it than from the power-loom. The Ulster landscape is thickly planted with factories—their tall chimneys and many-windowed frontages telling of an industrial prosperity which is in marked contrast with the agricultural depression that forms so unwelcome a feature of other parts of the country. As for Belfast itself, the capital of the province, with its 250,000 inhabitants, its miles of streets, its handsome public buildings, its splendid warehouses, its scores of gigantic mills, and its extensive shipbuilding and engineering establishments, it is a vast industrial metropolis, combining the best elements of an English manufacturing town with the more agreeable features of Irish life and character. Belfast has produced many notable commercial leaders, whose abilities have been wisely divided between the promotion of their own individual enterprises and the advancement of the general good, and to-day can show as noble a roll of industrial names as almost any city in the empire. Amongst the firms which might be singled out for particular mention are firms like those of William Ewart and Sons, the York Street Flax Spinning Company, John S. Brown and Sons, and the famous Bessbrook Company, of which Mr. John Grubb Richardson was the founder. Mr. Richardson is, indeed, such a representative man in connection with the later developments of the Ulster linen trade, and the works in which he has for so many years taken an active and leading interest are so thoroughly representative of the trade itself, that we have thought well to make the Bessbrook undertaking the chief subject of our present article, although in doing that we are compelled to separate ourselves in point of geographical association to some extent from the linen metropolis.

Bessbrook is a manufacturing village about thirty miles distant from Belfast. It stands in a picturesque situation, close to the town of Newry, with a stretch of mountain scenery in the distance behind it, and a belt of green fields and woodland forming a sort of inner circle round it. The factory buildings, which are of a very extensive character, are of cut granite for the most part, and have an exceedingly substantial appearance. The principal mill consists of four stories, and both this and the other factories are remarkable for the loftiness and spaciousness of their rooms. Two tall chimneys stand forth like monumental towers far above the roofs of the mills, and disperse the smoke into the cloudland above, well away from the dwellings which form the model village of Bessbrook. Some idea of the extent of this industrial colony may be gathered from the fact that nearly 4,000 workpeople are employed at the place, and that the mills contain about 800 looms and 23,000 spindles. For the driving of this enormous weight of machinery six steam-engines, representing an indicated horse-power of 'upwards of 1,100, are required, entailing a consumption of 10,000 tons of coal per annum, which have all

to be brought from Newry. There are also several workshops, where all necessary repairs are executed, a large staff of mechanics being constantly employed in this department.

The Bessbrook works were first established in 1847, and were projected partly as an industrial and partly as a social experiment. Mr. John G. Richardson, a wealthy member of the Society of Friends, was the gentleman in whose intelligent brain the idea of the experiment was first conceived. The Bessbrook estate, the property of an Irish nobleman, was in the market at this time. It consisted of 6,000 acres, and both in regard to situation and extent exactly accorded with Mr. Richardson's requirements. Moreover, one portion of the estate yielded a blue granite of excellent quality, which not only provided material for building the factories, but has since been employed in the erection of many leading public institutions in England, the Manchester Town Hall amongst the number. Mr. Richardson had, to begin with, the co-operation of his brothers, who have since died, and the desire was to establish a model working village in which the principles of sobriety, thrift, and cleanliness should have favourable opportunities of development. The building of the works was a comparatively easy matter, for in that the founder had simply to imitate his manufacturer neighbours; but the creation of a village which was to yield its builder a higher satisfaction than that of mere rent and profit was a very different matter. There was to be no public-house in Bessbrook, no pawn-shop, no policeman. It seemed altogether beyond the range of practical possibilities to expect to establish such an Utopia with nothing more stable to work upon than a community of Irish working people. The materials certainly did not promise well, but Mr. Richardson was as high in hope as he was in purpose, and resolved that at all events he would make the attempt. Within the shadow of the great factories he built a series of streets of substantial appearance, with a central square or market-place, where shops and public institutions form a striking feature. Each house accommodates one family, and comprises from three to five rooms, according to the size of the family occupying it. The institutions of the village include a school, to which every householder has to send his children, a penny a week being charged for each child whether he attends the school or not; a dispensary, where a doctor is regularly in attendance; a library and news-room, where the leading papers are taken; and several chapels or meeting-houses where the workpeople can perform their devotions according to their creeds. The firm subscribe £100 a year to the school, and also a handsome sum to the dispensary. There are shops to meet all the requirements of the people. To the north of the town is a farm of 300 acres which the firm carry on for the benefit of the villagers, pure milk being thus assured (amongst other things) to the citizens of Bessbrook. A series

of allotment gardens of large extent has been laid out on the outskirts of the village, the tenant of each house having a share apportioned to him. There is a "West End," too, at Bessbrook, a residential quarter where the gentlemen occupying managerial positions at the works live, and all have the benefit of the view of the artificial lake which serves to feed the mill. The Quaker meeting-house, in which the religion of the founder is quietly allowed to work its peaceful mission, is situated at the entrance to the town, and here Mr. Richardson and his family often worship with their workpeople in the unobtrusive fashion of their sect. Mr. Richardson's Bessbrook residence is in close contiguity to the meeting-house, and with its surroundings of beautiful shrubberies and ornamental grounds, gives to this part of the estate an exceedingly picturesque appearance. The River Camlough flows through these pretty groves, and although only a small stream serves for the water-supply of the mills of the district, and, widening into pleasant pools here and there, affords many attractive views, with the thick foliage of the trees hanging over its margin. The town altogether is full of life, beauty, and animation, and the traveller who makes it a halting-place on his journey from Belfast to Dublin will be well repaid for his trouble. He will find no drunken orgies at Bessbrook, no exhibitions of squalor and wretchedness such as are but too common in ordinary town life in Ireland, and no obstructions of law and order. Those who cannot exist without the gin-palace or the beer-house had better not fix their abode in this model colony, for although the firm do not insist upon their workpeople being total abstainers, the majority of them have found the benefit and comfort of subscribing to the principles of their industrial captain, and look with such disfavour upon the indulgers in intoxicants that he must indeed be a hardened offender who can face their scorn and contempt for any length of time. The temptation to drink, however, is not in their midst, and it is hardly worth while making the journey to Newry, two and a half miles away, for the mere sake of getting intoxicated when the unsteady return home will be made the subject of the disparaging comment of one's neighbours. As far as has been possible, without undue interference with the liberty of the subject, or a too obtrusive exercise of the paternal system of local government, the people of Bessbrook have been kept aloof from evil influences, with the result that the town has one of the cleanest records of any place within the Queen's dominions. The social experiment has in every way been as satisfactory as the industrial experiment, and now in his old age Mr. Richardson is able to look back upon the idea of his early manhood as a problem solved and a fact accomplished. Many similar attempts have been made to realize industrial Utopias, but in no instance with greater success than at Bessbrook, which was started several years

before the establishment of Saltaire, perhaps the most notable of the model colonies on English soil.

A tour of inspection through the Bessbrook works, with a brief description of the various processes of the linen manufacture as there carried on, will doubtless prove of some interest.

To begin at the outset of the manipulation of the flax, we have to visit the warehouses in which the fibre is stored up just as it has come in from the various markets of the province, or from the Continental marts from which it has been imported. Here it is weighed and picked, after which it is passed forward to what is called the "roughing" department, where from eighty to a hundred men are employed in putting the flax through steel gills or upright wires set in a wooden bench. Long practice has made these men wonderfully expert in the handling of the fibre, which they pull through the dangerous-looking wires with great dexterity and skill. The flax is selected and arranged according to sample, it being of the utmost importance to the subsequent processes that as even and level a quality as possible should be put together in this department. In the hackling-room the fibre is submitted to a still further sorting and sampling. Here can be seen both machine and hand hackling. The machines used are what are known as Horner's patent, which perform all the operations of combing and cleaning automatically, except the changing of completed samples for those about to be acted upon. The work of changing is performed by boys, who look after the machines and keep them constantly supplied with fibre. There are over a hundred boys engaged in this department.

After having been subjected to the sorting and hackling processes, the flax is passed on to the preparing department, where machines of a more elaborate character carry on the work of manipulation, taking up the short pieces on an endless apron, and, after passing them through the necessary rollers and stretching appliances, delivering them into cans, from whence they are taken to the roving machines and wound upon bobbins. The preparing department, with its little army of female workers and its buzz and hum of machinery, presents a scene of great activity. The whole length of the large factory is exposed to the view and can be taken in at a glance. Most of the preparing machinery, it ought to be mentioned, is of home construction, having been supplied by Messrs. Combe, Barbour and Combe, the machine makers, of Belfast.

The remaining processes are very similar to those in the other textile manufactures. A writer on the "Industries of Ulster" gives the following description of these processes: "The spinning department is the one to which the prepared fibre is taken, and the rooms in which the spinning frames are fixed are alongside and above the preparing machinery, and present nearly the same busy scene. The yarns are now taken off in bobbins as

delivered from the spinning frames, and suitably divided for warps and wefts, then wound upon frames, and made into hanks, taken to the drying-room, and after completion of this process they are bundled for use in the machinery which prepares them for the looms. This machinery is of an elaborate and complex nature, but works beautifully and smoothly. Without diagrams it would be difficult to give a conception of the 'bank' upon which the bobbins are ranged, and from which they deliver their yarn through perforated metal plates. The yarn is then led down into a straight line, and, passing through wire uprights, is delivered upon a roller in a kind of skeleton web. This again is unwound, and passes through another somewhat similar operation, while a bath of thickish paste is administered, which is called 'dressing.' This is necessary for the subsequent weaving process, and has nothing to do with the final finish, as goods are woven generally in the unbleached state. The temperature of this dressing-room has to be maintained at about 120 degs., and the visitor emerges from it with warm reminiscences of the tepidarium of the Turkish bath."

The weaving sheds are fine, lofty and spacious rooms, and disclose a vast labyrinth of pulleys, belts, and complex mechanical contrivances, the looms keeping up an incessant rattle and clatter, as the weavers watch their lightning-like movements. Plain linens are mostly produced in the weaving-rooms here, but at Craigmore, about a mile away, the firm have some two hundred looms employed in the weaving of the more delicate and richer descriptions of damasks, in the working out of whose designs the Jacquard machine is brought into operation, the adaption most generally in use being that known as the "Bessbrook."

As far as the processes of manufacture are concerned, the damask fabrics may at this stage be looked upon as complete, but they have still numerous finishing ordeals to go through before they are ready for the market. In the first place, the woven pieces have to be submitted to the operation of bleaching, and for that purpose have for a time to part company with Bessbrook. They have not to travel far, however, nor have they to leave the charge altogether of the firm by whom they have been manufactured. They are sent to the bleaching and finishing works of Messrs. J. N. Richardson, Sons, and Owden, Limited, at Glenmore, near Lisburn, of which Mr. John Grubb Richardson, the founder of Bessbrook, is the leading partner. We will take the liberty of following the linen cloth from the looms to this place, and watch through what additional processes it has to go before it is ready to be returned to Bessbrook.

When the linen comes from the loom it still retains the natural brown hue of the flax, and has to be changed to pure white. Before this can be effected many strange and wondrous processes have to be gone through, many battles with insidious

chemicals have to be fought, and many startling miracles have to be performed by the assistance of ingenious mechanism. Nowhere are these various operations accomplished with greater success than at Glenmore, where the processes are carried on all the year round with undeviating activity. In the olden time bleaching operations were entirely suspended during the winter months, from the end of October to the middle of March, but as the demand for Irish linens increased, ways and means were soon found of making all seasons alike available for bleaching purposes.

It was towards the end of the last century that the Glenmore firm (of which Mr. Jonathan Richardson was then the head, and three of whose great-grandchildren are directors of the present company) came to the determination to bring this change about. The firm had even at that early period a name and a reputation in the linen markets of the world, but when they made it known that they were going to make the attempt to bleach in the winter as well as in the summer, they brought upon themselves no small amount of ridicule. The trade laughed at the notion. The Richardsons, however, were not men to speak boastfully of their intentions, or to promise what they did not see their way to perform. Machinery was introduced in aid of nature, and before very long the firm was able to execute bleaching orders at all periods of the year. It was their turn to laugh now, but they contented themselves with simply sticking to their business and extending its borders so as to cope with their ever-increasing orders. Improvement upon improvement was effected, and enlargement after enlargement, until to-day the firm stands pre-eminent amongst the bleachers and finishers of the province of Ulster.

The works at Glenmore are admirably situated. They stand in the midst of a wide expanse of fields and lawns perfectly adapted to the purposes of natural bleaching, and comprise in their substantially-built premises all the needful appliances and machinery for successfully carrying on the immense business of the firm. The river Lagan flows past the works, and forms the source of the water-supply for all the earlier processes, while the later operations, which necessitate the purest of water, are provided for by the storage of spring water in large reservoirs, one of which, about a mile distant from the works, covers an area of about sixteen acres. Motive power for the machinery is supplied by four large steam-engines, beam and horizontal, and one large turbine and two ordinary water-wheels. These are capable of being worked separately, or in connection with each other, and provide ample power for all the requirements of the concern.

When the webs of woven linen, brown and raw in appearance, arrive at Glenmore, they are spirited away to a room reserved for their reception, where they have special marks of identification put upon them so that at any future stage they can be recognized.

This having been done, they are forwarded to the boiling vessels, where a proper alkaline preparation is awaiting them, and into which they are ruthlessly plunged. When they have been well packed in, the covers are screwed down upon them, and steam is infused into their midst at high-pressure. This process is continued for some hours—it may be only two, or it may be twelve, as the circumstances may demand. But, however long or however short the operation may be, no diminution of boiling power or chemical force is allowed to take place. A constant circulation of hot water, impregnated with the preparation, is kept up by means of an ingenious mechanical contrivance. When the boiling is completed to the satisfaction of the experts, the covers are unscrewed and the linen is lifted out of its seething bath. The washing machines, which are automatically worked, next take the cloth in hand and thoroughly cleanse and purify it. Then the webs are taken on to the greens and lawns outside and lovingly spread out in all their snowy whiteness, where all the breezes of heaven are permitted to play upon them, their stay in the open air being timed in accordance with the atmospheric conditions. They are taken inside from time to time for further treatment, and again and again are stretched out in all their length upon the grass.

The finishing processes are next brought into operation, in which many ingenious machines are employed, all working with precision and rapidity, taking the longest webs repeatedly through wet preparations, and then across drying cylinders, with the greatest ease. The machines used for the starching and blueing of pieces are particularly worthy of notice, dipping the cloth at one point into a mixture which seems to the uninitiated to have been specially contrived for giving back to the fabric all the impurities of which it has been previously cleansed, and the moment afterwards conveying it dexterously through a spray of pure water and over rollers, leaving it at the other end in a condition of immaculate whiteness. We now accompany the cloth to the beetling department, which is of great extent at Glenmore. The firm have two distinct systems of beetling machines in operation at these works, as well as at Millbrook, a mile or so further up the river, where auxiliary works are always kept in full swing. Amongst the beetling machines recently introduced at Glenmore is one of a new and much improved construction, and one of the largest to be found in the trade. Its operation differs considerably from that of the older class of machine; it attains a much higher speed and makes a greater number of strokes of the hammer, while it permits of several webs being beetled at the same time, some being put on while others are taken off. To admit of this triple arrangement, three rollers are conveniently placed, the whole being acted upon by suitable gearing. Upwards of a hundred beetling machines are used by the firm at Glenmore and Millbrook together. The calendering of the webs may be regarded as

the final process of all, and this work is performed by machines of great size and power, having hot and cold rollers. Many kinds of goods, it ought to be mentioned, do not require to be submitted to these later operations, but are turned out with the pure and natural soft finish. Diapers and linens for nursery and domestic purposes supply instances of the class of goods referred to.

Not less than 300,000 pieces of linen cloth are bleached yearly at the works of Messrs. J. N. Richardson, Sons, and Owden, Limited, and their warehouse at Belfast, to which the goods are forwarded direct from the bleaching fields, is one of the sights of the town, being a large and handsome building in the Italian style. Here the linen pieces are subjected to a careful examination; after which they are folded and ornamented, and then despatched to their various customers.

Returning again to Bessbrook we find that the cloth which has been received back from the bleachers has to go through the hands of the cloth-passers, who, with a rapidity that shows perfect knowledge, select the linens according to their qualities and set them apart for the various markets for which they are adapted. This inspection having been successfully undergone, the cloth has to be lapped, measured, folded, pressed, packed, labelled, and so forth, before being sent out to the markets. The show-rooms contain examples of every description of goods made from flax, from ordinary table linen to the richest damasks. One of the attractions on view is a damask table cloth in the form of a picture, a fac-simile of one manufactured for the Philadelphia Exhibition, the design of which represents the signing of the famous treaty between William Penn and the Indians, "the only treaty never sworn on oath and never broken." The figures introduced into this woven piece of art are those of the Quaker founder of Philadelphia, his secretary, and two Indians, the grouping being effective and picturesque and the whole design one of great beauty.

A few more facts relating to Bessbrook ought to be mentioned before we take our leave of it. Being practically a teetotal colony it is natural that societies connected with the temperance cause should flourish there. There is a Band of Hope with nearly a thousand members, a temperance society, and an association of Good Templars. A brass band has also been established at Bessbrook, whose musical exercises are of such an entertaining character that their services are often desired far beyond their own local borderland. Another valued institution in Bessbrook is its savings bank, for the encouragement of habits of thrift amongst the workers. The depositors are guaranteed five per cent. interest for their investments, and so largely is this privilege taken advantage of that it is no unusual thing to have a working-man customer with his £300 or £400 safely earning its five per cent. at this institution. Economy is a virtue that thrives in the

Bessbrook atmosphere. You see evidences of it on all sides. Even the waste flax that the machines reject, and which in the form of fluff flies about in the air and settles on the floor, is utilized, realizing to the proprietors an income of from £1,000 to £2,000 a year.

Mr. John Grubb Richardson, whose name is a household word in Ulster in connection with the staple trade of the province, was born about the year 1800 in the town of Lisburn, where his grandfather, James Nicholson Richardson, and afterwards his father, were engaged in the linen trade. The ancestors of the family, which is of French extraction, came over to Ireland at the period of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and settled shortly afterwards in the village of Lisnagawey (now called Lisburn). At the time of the birth of John Grubb Richardson, the linen industry was in its infancy, bleaching operations being only carried on twice in the year, while the quantity of material which underwent the process was, as a matter of course, very limited. Along with the celebrated Dr. Handcock, Mr. Richardson's father was the first to introduce an improved method of bleaching linen, which enabled them to carry on the work all the year round.

After the death of Mr. J. G. Richardson's father, the partnership consisted of that gentleman, the late Wm. Richardson, and John Richardson, and they had works in Lisburn and Donegall Place, Belfast. Trade prospered in their hands, and owing to the great energy and ability of the partners, the business increased to an extraordinary degree, and in the year 1847 the then firm bought the Bessbrook estate. The Bessbrook works came under the immediate direction of Mr. John G. Richardson some years later, he leaving the present concern to take up the sole management of the new establishment.

During the time of the civil war in America the linen trade of the north of Ireland received a great impetus; indeed, the extraordinarily rapid growth of the town of Belfast, both in population and wealth, is chiefly attributable to this cause. During these prosperous times the Messrs. Richardson extended their operations to such a degree that their warehouse in Donegall Place, Belfast, became far too small for their business, and they erected their present magnificent premises in Donegall Square North, which are hardly equalled in the United Kingdom. About the year 1876, Mr. J. G. Richardson having through family relationship and other connection with the original firm of Messrs. J. N. Richardson, Sons, & Owden, again joined the latter concern, and become chairman of the company, the two establishments were amalgamated as a limited liability company. With respect to the name of Owden, it need only be said that the member of the firm bearing this name, who was a brother of the late Alderman Owden, of London, entered the house in 1847 as an apprentice, and at the expiration of his term

of service showed such an aptitude for the business that a partnership was offered to him, of which he availed himself, and he remained a useful member until the time of his death, about twenty-three years ago, when his place was taken by his son-in-law, Mr. Greer, late M.P. for Carrickfergus, who has since become deputy-chairman of the company.

Mr. Richardson, as a consistent member of the Society of Friends, has never taken any prominent part in politics, and has twice refused to be appointed to the commission of the peace. He has been married twice. His first wife was Helena, daughter of the late Richard Grubb, of Cahir Abbey, by whom he had one son, James Nicholson Richardson, late member of Parliament for county Armagh, and one daughter. By his second wife, Jane Marian, daughter of the late Thomas C. Wakefield, of Morgallen House, Gilford, county Down, he has had issue one son and seven daughters.

The splendid warehouse of the company in Donegall Square North, Belfast, has always formed one of the chief objects of attraction for distinguished visitors to this part of Ireland. Since 1880 it has been visited once by Earl Cowper, when lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and twice by Lord Spencer while occupying the same exalted position. The last Viceroy of Ireland to honour the warehouse of Messrs. Richardson, Sons, & Owden by his presence was Lord Carnarvon, in September, 1885. But at no time has more interest been manifested in the work done by this firm than when the Prince and Princess of Wales visited the warehouse in April, 1885, and minutely inspected the goods produced by the firm, which were so arranged that their Royal Highnesses could see at a glance the extraordinary perfection to which the manufacture of linen goods had been brought. On the occasion of the last visit of the British Association to Belfast, this warehouse was selected as the one most suitable for showing the members the progress which had been made of late years in the national industry. The Richardsons have, indeed, accomplished so much on behalf of the linen trade that their names will always stand prominently out in the long and honourable list of the builders up of Ireland's chief staple trade. It is on such lines that the future prosperity of the country has to be secured.

CLEOPATRA'S ASP.

ACTORS accustomed only to the short journeys and civilized surroundings which are connected with a tour through the English provinces can have little notion of what it is to be "on the road" in the Western States of America. It is not only that the country and the people are less civilized, but both are so *different*. Side by side with the strongest marks of primitive habitation you find instances of the latest inventions. The Pullman car startles the antelope and the prairie dog in its passage; advertisements of Mustang Liniment are daubed upon immemorial cliffs; and every little township of wooden houses has its church, its newspaper, and its Lyceum.

It was in the latter buildings (which for the benefit of the uninitiated I may explain serve much the same purposes as an English town hall) that the travelling company that I had arranged to join at Kansas city, in the spring of 188-, usually gave its performances. It is surprising, I may remark in passing, how advanced the Americans of the Western "cities" are in the arrangements of these local theatres. In most of them some decent stock scenery may be found; and the rooms are nearly always clean, and the general arrangements most systematic.

The company I was about to join was one of those struggling combinations of which there are so many travelling the States. Upon the basis of a small amount of capital and a large stock of histrionic enthusiasm, the "leading man" of the company, who was also the manager, had "organized" the troupe for the exposition to the benighted denizens of the Far West of the beauties of the legitimate drama in general, and of his own acting in particular. His wife was a little woman from Florida, and the darkness of her complexion and a certain blueness of the tinge of her finger-nails spoke pretty decidedly of an admixture of negro blood in herself or in her ancestors. I found, soon after I joined the company, that she had been tried in Shakesperian leading parts, but had so egregiously failed in them that even to the partial eyes of her spouse the fact was evident that a substitute for her in these rôles must be found. The result was an advertisement in a New York theatrical paper, and my acceptance thereof, decided partly by the fact that I had been "resting" for a tediously long period, but more by the

opportunity which seemed to be offered to me of gaining experience in the higher walks of the drama.

I found the manager, who rejoiced in the Transatlantically aristocratic name of Calhoun, extremely polite, indeed, perhaps rather too much so, considering that his wife was a member of the company. I must say, however, that this amiability on Mr. Calhoun's part arose much more from histrionic selfishness than from anything approaching to gallantry. Like most enthusiasts, he would have sacrificed anything to improve the effect of his performances; and the fact that in me he found a leading lady who, whilst competent to sustain the characters allotted to her to the satisfaction of his audiences, was yet sufficiently modest to adopt *his* views of the proper treatment of a dramatic situation, had, I am sure, more to do with his cordiality than any personal admiration for myself. I need hardly say that the "views" alluded to generally dictated giving a prominence in his own performances and a retiring reserve in mine which was not in every case warranted by the author's text.

As for Mrs. Calhoun (Pepita, as her husband called her—an example we may as well, for the sake of brevity, follow), she showed her dislike for me from the moment we met. It was, perhaps, too much to expect an actress who had made a failure in "leading business," and who had been relegated to the Charmians and Emilias of Shakesperian representations, to welcome with cordiality the individual who came to take her place. At the same time, I think Pepita might have been a little less demonstrative of her antipathy. When we met in the passages of the various theatres which we visited she swept past after the slightest of nods, turning to me with marked disdain her rounded, though somewhat swarthy shoulders; and whilst I was upon the stage I often caught a glimpse of her standing in the wings, glaring upon me with eyes that shone with the lurid glare of bitter detestation.

I soon discovered that, in addition to her hatred of me as a dramatic rival, Pepita cherished a feeling of jealousy of another kind. Knowing how deeply artistic egotism drowned every other voice in Mr. Calhoun's breast, I was much amused at this ridiculous fancy on her part; and I am ashamed to say that, to annoy Pepita, I often elaborated the "business" between Mr. Calhoun and myself, especially in scenes of an amorous nature. I had, however, to be careful how I did this; for the tragedian, whose mind was entirely occupied with himself and the effect which he was producing upon the audience, was inclined to be uneasy at my thus putting myself forward; and I saw clearly that the day on which I cast him distinctly into the shade would be the day on which I should receive a firm but courteous "notice."

I will pass over several weeks of experience of this sort, during

which I had firmly established myself in the good graces of the various members of the company (with the exception always of the hostile Pepita), and come to the time of our visit to the little city of Selma, in the State of —. I generally made a point, in the places in which we played, of making the acquaintance of a few of the more respectable of the inhabitants. Manners are much franker and more simple in this particular than with you in England, and a well-conducted young woman in a travelling company is received with hospitality by the unconventional people of the Western townships. During our stay at Selma I had made the acquaintance of the family of Deacon Clay, which consisted of one strapping girl and three stalwart sons, all about (or over) six feet in height. The eldest and most stalwart of these three was named Saul, and it was he who in the forenoons during the first three days of our stay at Selma showed me the “lions” of the place, the waterfall, the saw mill, and the “Maiden’s Leap”—for Selma, like other places, had its romantic traditions. On the fourth, as I, like Oliver, “asked for more,” he proposed to take me on a visit to “Old Leathers.” I consented, and on our way to this curious personage’s abode he gave me some information about him.

Old Leathers, it appeared, was a harmless lunatic, who lived on odd jobs and the charity of the neighbouring farmers. His particular weakness was a friendship for snakes in general, and rattle-snakes in particular. To avoid the danger of being bitten by these reptiles, he invariably wore a suit of soft leather, boots, jerkin, and all—hence his cognomen.

We started from the town in one of those boxes upon wheels which are dignified in the West by the name of “waggon;” and after a jolting drive of several miles arrived at a glen between two “bluffs.” At the top of this Saul fastened the horses, and led me carefully down the narrow path which wound its way to the bottom of the little valley. It was bestrewn with masses of rock of all sizes and shapes, three or four of which, thrown together by some convulsion of nature, formed a sort of cave between them. Pausing some twenty feet above this, Saul hallooed, and a figure, which I saw at once must be “Old Leathers,” appeared in answer to the summons, like a demon through a trap in a pantomime.

The old man was eccentrically clad in the suit of leather in which I had been prepared to see him attired, and the skin of a raccoon with the tail hanging gracefully behind, formed a characteristic covering for his grey head. His features were deeply marked with age and a hard frontier life, but had an appearance of haleness and health only seen in those habituated to an open-air existence.

“Here’s a young lady come all the way from New York to see you,” said Saul, with pardonable exaggeration—Old Leathers

took off his cap and bowed with the air of a polished courtier—"Can't you show her your pets?"

"Why, yes," said the old man. "But you must not be frightened," he continued with a genial smile. "It's not every one that fancies 'em. Keep quiet and I will bring them out."

Though considerably nervous, I concealed a cowardice which I felt that Saul would have despised, and was silent, whilst the old man took a flute from his pocket, and began to play one of those "Christy Minstrel" airs which are so popular in the United States.

Then I saw a sight which astonished me. From under each of the numerous blocks of stone which were scattered around came a snake. "Copper-heads," spotted with copper-coloured splotches not only on the head but all over the body; "garter-snakes," grey and yellow-green, were there; but the majority of the audience at Old Leathers' concert belonged to the species designated in natural history books as the "deadly" rattle-snake. They came forward and curled and wound themselves about Old Leathers' ankles, their heads gliding upwards over his legs, moving as if in caress, and then falling to the ground, rising again to repeat the motion. The quaint figure of the old frontiers-man; the grotesque contrast between the strains of "Mother, I am dying fast," and the general surroundings; the background of rocky cliffs and irregular rock-strewn grass; and the sight of the ever-moving, silent reptiles, whom my fancy and their constant restless motion multiplied into thrice their number, had a strange effect upon my senses. Louder and longer sounded the soft notes of the flute; faster and faster coiled and uncoiled themselves the supple bodies of the snakes; till, at last, I felt a sort of mesmeric drowsiness coming over me, and had I gazed at this strange spectacle much longer, I believe, despite my horror of snakes in general, and "rattlers" in particular, I should have left the spot where I was standing and joined in a tarantala dance with Old Leathers' favourites.

But the music ceased, and almost before he had time to put up his instrument every snake had disappeared as suddenly as he had come. I pressed the old man to take a reward for his exhibition, but he courteously refused. "If you would like to buy one, miss," he said; "I sell many to menageries, and send some to England." Seeing my horror, he added, "You would not be the first, miss. Only this morning——" "Oh, no!" I interrupted him in horror. Thanking him for his courtesy, we departed as we had come, but by what seemed an easier path. As we climbed it I noticed on the ground a glove. On picking it up I saw it was a woman's, and abstractedly put it into my pocket, and we gained the waggon and drove home as fast as Deacon Clay's two trotters could carry us.

It had been arranged that we should play "Antony and Cleopatra" on that particular evening, by particular desire of the deacon and leading inhabitants of Selma, and I asked Saul to drive quickly that I might be back in time for the "call" at twelve. On arriving at the hall, I found a warm altercation going on between Mr. Calhoun and his wife. She had formerly attempted the part of Cleopatra, and I believe it was the one in which she was least unsatisfactory. But I really believe that her strongest objection to my undertaking the rôle arose from her distaste for the demonstrations of affection which the great dramatist's lines suggest between the amorous Antony and the Egyptian queen.

I was obliged to be a listener to this connubial dispute; and from what I heard I gathered that the conduct of Pepita had of late not been entirely exemplary. She had, it seemed, been "making too free" with a party of "cow boys" (cattle-drovers from Texas) who had honoured Selma with a visit; and it was as much to teach her a lesson as to secure an adequate representation of the part that her husband refused, in not too civil terms, to alter the cast of "Antony and Cleopatra." Pepita might play Charmian if she chose; otherwise, she might "leave it alone."

At this refusal the passionate temper of the *mestizo* flared into flame. She first of all poured out upon the devoted head of her husband a flood of abuse which I need not write down here; and, then turning to me, she scolded me soundly for having "supplanted" her, as she called it. "Yes," she said, her black eyes flashing, her nostrils dilated, and her hand clenched in a style that, if she could only have reproduced it on the stage, would have made her successful as a *tragédienne*, "you have taken my bread out of my mouth, and you have taken my husband; but, mark my word, you won't live to enjoy either!" Then, her eyes falling upon the glove which happened to be protruding from the pocket of my ulster, she cried, "Thief! Would you take *everything*?" snatched the glove away, and dashed, weeping wildly, out of the place.

I was surprised to discover that it was Pepita's glove which I had picked up, and an uneasy wonder how it came to be left where I had found it hovered, so to speak, at the back of my brains for some hours. But, as these were also occupied with the very harassing work of rehearsing, it was not strange that my "secondary musings" had no definite result.

There was a sort of suppressed hostility in Pepita's manner when we met at the theatre in the evening. She was paler than usual, and more reflective and abstracted. She played Charmian as if in a dream. There was evidently something on, or in, her mind which made her manner so unusual. Once, when her husband attempted to enter her dressing-room, she slammed the door in his face, and bolted it on the inside.

The play proceeded, as usual, till we came to the well-known

scene of Cleopatra's suicide in the last act. The actor who played the clown was ushered in by Cleopatra's handmaidens, and in answer to my question, "Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there, that kills and hurts not?" delivered the speech set down for him. While waiting for my cue, I was harassed by a sound for which I could not account. It was a gentle "whirr," like a dry pea rattling in its pod. I tried dreamily to localize this noise; and it is a curious instance of the difficulty of decision in these cases that it was not until I had actually taken the basket into my hand that I found that the sound was caused by something inside it.

The exigencies of the stage leave no time for hesitation. Come what may the business of a scene must not stop. I took the basket from the clown, and, after speaking the lines which precede the action, raised the lid, and took what I presumed was the usual "property" snake from its interior.

I shall never forget the shudder of repulsion that ran over my body as I felt the clammy, oozing *thing* which I had grasped. A sort of restriction of the muscles took place which prevented my loosing my hold, even when I saw that it contained a large rattle-snake, which, stirred to a high pitch of anger by its restraint, was drawing back its head, with its neck in exactly the shape of a note of interrogation, its mouth open, and its little eyes sparkling with rage, whilst it agitated its rattle savagely. In another moment it darted its nose against my neck with a force that was startling, and, overcome with sickening horror, I fainted.

* * * *

When I came to myself I was suffering an intolerably burning pain in my neck. Saul Clay was standing near the sofa in the dressing-room, to which I had been carried after I had fainted. In a few words of deep feeling he told me that he had witnessed the accident, and, though not able to prevent the snake biting me, had applied the rough, but generally effective, frontier remedy of placing some gunpowder upon the bleeding wound and igniting it. It was to this readiness of action on his part that I probably owed my life. The snake had escaped in the confusion.

I was brought to the belief that, but for Saul's remedy my fate would have been sealed, by a shocking occurrence which happened the same night. It appeared that Mrs. Calhoun had determined to leave her husband, and fly with one of the cow-boys I have already alluded to. Late in the night she took the keys of the building from her husband's pocket, and came to the theatre, probably to procure some expensive dresses which were in her room behind the scenes. Whilst groping about for a light she must have trodden upon the snake, which probably dropped through a chink in the stage into her apartment; and when the janitor came in the morning, he found her stiff

in death. Some letters in a man's hand, which were discovered in her pocket, explained her plans.

This painful event broke up the company. Learning that I was about to undertake a tedious journey back to New York, the good deacon persuaded me to remain with him till I might be able to hear of another engagement. I remained, and it was not long before one was offered me. The most perspicacious of my readers will have already foreseen that it came from Saul Clay, and that the part which I was to fill was that of his wife. I accepted the *rôle*, and he says that I fill it to satisfaction; in fact, "leave nothing to be desired." A blue mark on my neck, which nothing can erase, is the only memento which I possess of the painful accident which led to our marriage.

SONG.

I.

Doubt not this heart, nor seek one answer more ;
Doubt not this heart that trusteth all thy own,
This heart that trusteth all itself to thee.

II.

Who loves the life which only self can prize ?
Who hates not fear that e'en itself suspects ?
But this my heart dreads nought but thy delay.

III.

Sweet Faith, whose eye can watch love's beacons sure,
True as the spring that rears her sister's flowers—
So hides this heart its promised troth for thee.

IV.

Doubt not this heart! Thine not for spring alone,
Or summer, but through winter's bleakest rage,
Though every heart had fled, still near, still thine.

PALLANZA.

WE arrive at the Grand Hotel. An electric bell of unusual power notifies our advent; the doors are flung open; five or six waiters arrange themselves in perspective; and a little gentleman with a sheaf of papers in his hand greets us as we enter.

"How do you do, Miss Goodheart! How do you do, Miss Keith! I am very glad to see you again, and so is Bari. Bari—Bari—come here, sir!"

Mr. Seyschab is always gracious in his welcome. Bari is a big St. Bernard dog, his inseparable companion. Bari considers Mr. Seyschab the head of creation, all other individuals ranking in his estimation with the calves and cows in Monte Bello, to whom his master also requires him to be, occasionally, civil.

Mr. Seyschab is a remarkable man. Where he finds room in his brain to stow away his many talents; how he is able, physically, to sustain the wear and tear of his untiring activity, puzzles me—I might add, is a matter of awe. He is a musician, linguist, architect, farmer, hotel-keeper, general referee, and umpire. He oversees everything done in his domains, succeeds in what he undertakes, and yet finds time to give a helping hand to those who need it. "But they must be *honest*, Miss Goodheart. Honest and willing to work. Then I will help them. Of course. Yes."

Not so many years ago he came to Pallanza an utter stranger. He spied out the point of land opposite the Isola San Giovanni as the warmest spot for winter in all the countryside, and bought it then and there. Next, he planned the Grand Hotel and saw it built, of massive stone, according to his own ideas, with granite pillars, large *atrio*, and wide low steps which should not fatigue his guests. To the Italian nature his Bavarian straightforwardness was an insult. It could not understand a man who said, "I will" and "I won't" flatly and kept his word. It liked smooth speeches, and double dealing, and Mr. Seyschab's habits were out of order. He would not take nineteen bricks where he paid for twenty; he spoke disagreeable truths now and then; he would not take advice calculated to damage his interests; he went his own way with a kind of steam-engine energy that exasperated the natives. The climax came when the prices of the Grand Hotel were published. Who ever heard of such ridiculous charges for a first-class establishment? Absurd! The adjacent hotel-keepers made a league together; Stresa and Baveno joined to ruin the

hated foreigner. They told intending visitors no such place existed—Mr. Seyschab had failed, the house was shut up; his own porter was bribed to send arriving guests to rival establishments. And yet he persevered. His life was in danger; yet he walked about the neighbourhood, his only guard Bari's predecessor; he acted with inflexible justice and honesty; he laboured incessantly; where he could, he was kind, and, as a matter of course, he attained his end. He is a great man now; the other day he was asked to advise in a complicated matter at Stresa. He has bought another piece of land, and again another. He grows his own vegetables, keeps his own fowl, churns his own butter, supplies his own milk, makes gas, is station-master, and has, in the season, the hotel packed from top to bottom. When I was there in April not less than two hundred and twenty sat down each day to dinner. He has grown rich, they say, and he deserves it.

On the other side of the road are the grounds of Villa Monte Bello—now a *dépendance* of the Grand Hotel. There is a side gate always open, and a little zig-zag path up the hill, running through a plantation of firs. It is not *very* steep and possesses three advantages above the longer and easier carriage drive it intersects: first, the aromatic perfume from the trees; next, the shortness of the distance; last, no view till the summit is reached.

Here, we find a green wooden bench and, perhaps, a footstool. There is, a few paces distant, a modern ruin where we can buy milk fresh from the cow; but let us sit down instead. Goldfinches are chirping happily in the thicket near; Mr. Seyschab's hens are clucking in their wired-in yard, and the soft lowing of his Swiss cows notifies the approach of milking-hour. The air is full of sweet meadow fragrance—spring freshness—and a warm, luxurious sense of well-being steals over us. We begin to comprehend how eternal idleness, eternal, passive admiration of the Creator's works should have been the old Italians' notion of future blessedness. It is so still here, so beautiful, and the grand curves of the Everlasting Hills so full of rest.

Down below, Isola Bella, Isola Madre, Isola Pescatori look like bouquets floating on the calm grey lake; and tiny boats with awnings and gaily-coloured flags are gliding hither and thither between us and them. On the farther shore rises the *Matterone*, with a little snow on its summit, overshadowing Baveno; and the white scars on the point beyond, where the mountain has been quarried for marble, shine pitifully under the dark pine wood immediately above. The extreme end of the Reach, to the right, is fringed with willows and poplars, and far, far in the distance the huge white barrier of the Simplon rises sheer from the valley to the sky. Nearer, overlapping each other in a wondrous maze of bluffs, peaks, and purple crags, are innumerable mountains, spiritualized, as it were, by the haze that hovers round them; and the ruddy slopes of *Monte Rosso*, behind Suna, throws into strong

relief the town of Pallanza with its colonnades and campanile, and rows of boats along the shore.

I prefer, myself, the Lago Maggiore to the Lago Como. There is, to me, a great charm in the broad expanse of grey water, in the velvety smoothness of the *Sasso di Ferro*, whose double outline stands out against the blue sky to the left. I like to watch the morning mists brood on the low hills behind St. Caterina, on Stresa and Baveno. I like to see the first early boat laden with stones make its toilsome way from Suna, round the point to Intra; and to wait at my window until the moon fades, and the stars grow dim, and the mists slowly wind themselves away. There is a largeness, a gentleness, a grandeur about Nature in this place, that, again, fairy tales become intelligible, and the mystery of dreaming life away while looking into some beautiful enchanted face becomes perfectly plain.

There is, certainly, no lack of variety at Pallanza. During the day there are numbers of excursions to be made by water and land. Boats and boatmen are always in waiting at the water gate at the foot of the hotel garden; and, by stepping into one of these, another species of "*dolce far niente*" can be experienced. The air upon the lake is peculiarly good for overworked heads—as I can testify. It is surprising how great a relief is felt, how much "wool" is removed from tired brains in the course of an hour's row; and then there is, besides, the pleasure of crushing camphor leaves on the Isola Bella, startling the pheasants on the Isola Madre, or bringing home camellias and azaleas from the Villa Francesini.

At Intra there is a glass manufactory, and also one of felt hats. Last autumn I went through the latter with an English philanthropist, great on the subject of strikes, and was considerably amused by the questions asked and the answers given. We saw the whole process of hat-making, from the cleansing of the fine angola wool to the wrapping up of "chimney-pots" in silver paper. As we were passing into the last department my friend could contain himself no longer. He laid one finger on the master's breast, "Tell me," said he solemnly, "are there any trades unions hereabouts?"

The master observed the finger carefully, raised his grave eyes to the philanthropist's face, and broke into a broad grin: "*Parmi les maîtres, non; parmi les ouvriers, oui, monsieur!*" he answered.

Then he showed us a beautiful "topper," fresh from the ironing block, inside of which was written in gold letters on a white satin ground, "*Stress and Co. Prize Metal, London and Paris.*"

"No trades union among the masters," quoth he! The last object of admiration we were expected to praise was a blank, whitewashed chamber, intended for the reception of an English

machine from Manchester, calculated to save a considerable amount of labour. Two strong impressions were left on my mind as we walked homewards, both results of our visit. The first arose from the cleansing of the wool. The light particles driven helplessly hither and thither within their glass case by a wind, the fury of which could be seen, and the roaring of which was supplied by the clamorous engines, reminded me of the place where Francesca da Rimini expiates her sin :

“ luogo d' ogni luce muto,
Che mugghia come fa mar per tempesta
Se da contrari vento è combattuto,

La bufera infernal che mai non resta,
Mena gli spiriti con sua rapina,
Voltando e percotendo gli molesta.”

Dante, probably, gathered the image from falling snow in a winter storm ; but though I have often watched the delicate flakes whirled through the streets of my native town, I never fully realized the pain of the quoted lines until I looked into the narrow, dusty case at Intra.

The second impression was more practical: *i.e.*, in days of *tournares* ladies should not walk between two rows of machinery in motion ; especially at Intra, where there is no precaution taken to avoid accidents, and where the passages are far from wide.

The most gorgeous sunset I saw that year, rejoiced us as we were walking homewards. When we came near Mrs. Ashburner's villa I, by chance, turned round to take a last peep at the St. Gotthard before rounding the point. The effect was beyond description. The Sasso di Ferro loomed through a lurid haze, a mass of sullen purple ; the lake was ruffled and green, instead of grey. Far in the distance the white tips of the Splügen range were dyed deep crimson. The St. Gotthard was as yet unchanged ; but the nearer hills were stained most vivid violet, red, and orange. It was a marvellous combination of colour. My exclamation caused the others to stop also, and I believe we walked most of the way along that part of the road backwards !

A few days later we made a pleasant excursion to the Roman bridge at Cossogno—a village perhaps three hours distant from Pallanza. We started from the hotel after *déjeuner* about two p.m., and drove past the prison into the country, by the church of the Madonna della Campagna, whose Moorish-looking tower seemed, to me, more than usually beautiful. This church is a favourite of ours. Tall elms grow before the door, broken granite pillars and capitals lie on the sward, and peeps of the lake, of wide meadows, of Monte Rosso are framed by the overhanging branches. Inside there are many frescoes, and some fine wood-carving ; but I am afraid what pleases me best in the whole building is the wooden

—the very plain indeed—wooden steps by which the preacher scrambles up on the rail of the chancel, and thence into the magnificent pulpit that presents such a fine appearance to the world. What if the good man were to slip—or the ladder to give way? Would the congregation quote Shakespeare?

In the shadow of the porch little children come to prepare their lessons for the next day's school; there the studious ones imbibe moral sentiments from copper-plate copies and the idle ones follow in thought the mazy mosquito dance or the wavering sunlight on the grass. Above them, on the wall, there is an old sundial, with the half-effaced figure of Death holding the arrow that marks the hour, and the inscription :

“ Oh tu che in mi guardi,
Vicin me troverai quado
Io tiro i colpi, se ben non vedi
Che più tu schivar, io so ben farli.”

Or, freely rendered into English :

“ O thou, that lookest upon me, wilt find me near when I strike the hours. I know well how to do it, so thou canst no longer see how to save thee.”

A little farther on, we crossed the river and drove along the bank for some distance; then turning to the right, we passed through a village boasting a town hall, but very narrow streets. Presently the scenery became wilder; Monte Rosso showed another phase of character, with chasms and crags instead of gentle slopes, as on the Pallanza side; the mountains formed an amphitheatre in which small hills lay sheltered; here and there, one the site of a village, with the usual *campanile* pointing skywards. Next we came to a few tumble-down buildings where vines clambered over balconies, and twined themselves round beams of ruined houses, and golden corn cobs were heaped together, drying in the sun. Dogs barked furiously after us, and a frightened hen flew over the horses' heads with the agility of previous practice. We climbed higher and higher, until the torrent below became a mere thread of green and silver; the air became more bracing, the hills more solemn, in a few minutes we dashed into Cossogno, and halted in style before the principal *albergo*.

Here we had to leave the carriage and go on foot through the town into the ravine which the bridge spans. We met a bridal party coming up from the valley; all the men marching in a group together, headed by a lad who played a concertina *con amore*, the women, bride included, toiling after, anyhow. They were not of much account so far as one might see. As presently, the path grew rougher and the descent more rapid, the Chief decided to let us go on alone while she rested under some trees; then we found a boy who, for a consideration, showed us the best way of getting down. But that best way was very bad.

When we arrived at the bridge, however, and the child left us we felt ourselves more than repaid. The torrent has worn itself a deep bed in the rocks, which start up to a considerable height sheer from the stream—a rich chocolate colour, contrasting beautifully with the transparent green of the water that rushed round a bend in its course between the pointed cliffs, dashing itself into foam under the bridge as it fell over some stones into a shadowy pool and hurried away, swiftly and quietly, round another curve. The bridge is a graceful, single arch thrown across the chasm, so far above the river and so far below the level of the road, as to appear hung almost mid-air. The only building within sight is a chapel, surrounded by green fields and chestnut trees, whose yellow leaves were already fluttering to the ground. The silence was profound, broken only by the subdued sighing of the wind through the trees and the roar of the water down below. Near at hand I picked the last violet of the year.

As we were climbing the hill on our way back to the carriage, the church bells rang out a wedding march, and we, again, met the bridal party who, headed by the concertina, were filing into a house to dance in a front room. We followed the example of two or three children, and peeped in between the bars of the grated window to see what a Cossogno ball was like. Graver dancing could hardly be imagined; owls are not half so solemn as these peasants were; with faces expressive of nothing but caldike-stupidity, they circled round and round the room—they grew hot, they grew hotter, they became exhausted, and still they continued without changing a muscle, or losing for an instant the blank, joyless, hopeless stare with which they had commenced. They did not quite approve of strangers looking on, so we left them to their serious dissipation and resumed our way to the *albergo*.

We returned through Intra instead of by the Madonna della Campagna, having on the road a beautiful view of the Sasso di Ferro, rising like an ideal mountain out of the grey lake. Sometimes the moon appears red behind it, and, could the proper hour be hit on, I fancy a drive from Cossogno to Pallanza by moonlight, when the gorges become mysterious and the little waterfalls silver, and the osmunda fern more fairy-like, when the air is warm, soft, and fragrant, would be as near perfection as anything this earth affords.

I tried to find a photograph of this Roman bridge in Pallanza, but failed; for the difficulty of obtaining a good point of view is great, owing to the steepness of the rocks, which afford no resting-place for man or camera. But perhaps the loss is not so serious after all, as it would take a very superior artist to do the effect justice.

Pallanza is an odd little town, full of arcades and funny shops. There is one street devoted almost entirely to the sale of chocolate

and sausages. It runs parallel to the quay and behind the market-place. Long black rosaries and silk rugs seem also the most prominent wares. Last autumn the latter were very cheap, as low as four francs; the former, I regret to say, rose in price. They are made of a fruit that grows, some say in the lake itself, others in the rivers that flow into the lake. A waiter on the Isola Bella assured me it was good to eat when fresh! But I am not sure he spoke from personal experience. He called it "*Marone del Lago*." By right these handsome, romantic-looking rosaries should cost only fifty centimes, though unsuspecting visitors often pay more. In the autumn, however, they were hard to find, and when at last I discovered one hanging in the window, covered with dust, the boy would not let me have it under seventy-five centimes.

"Why must I pay the extra sous?" I asked.

"*Per la polvere!*" he answered laughing. "For the dust!"

And that dust is warranted to last. No amount of brushing will get it off!

I ought not to conclude without speaking of Mr. Seyschab's garden. The grass is good, the trees are fine, but there are not many flowers. It is characteristic, though, as indeed it is of the hotel itself, that, in spite of the crowd collected there, it is always easy to be alone. There is no overcrowding; there is always room enough to escape from noise, even though the space is limited. If you have never noticed how the young leaves of the Japanese medlar curve at the point on a sunny day, you have a very pretty pleasure still in store when you go to Pallanza—each, a long, pale-green surface veined with darker lines, finishing in a delicate, graceful little sweep over, a sort of beautiful sauciness, as if it would ask, *Can you do that, I should like to know?* Yes, truly. If you feel inclined neither to go out boating nor walking, if you are too lazy to read, steal a footstool from its hiding-place under one of the great bear-like pines, and take possession of the bench under the Japanese medlars, looking towards Sta. Caterina, and in the course of an hour you will surely find out that *dolce far niente* does not by any means imply *doing nothing!*

ELWYN KEITH.

THE BLUEBELLS.

LIKE landscapes in the distance seen with graduated blue,
Forests of bluebells clothe the wood in one yet varying hue;
Beneath the shelt'ring trees they stand, safe from the with'ring
 heat,
And wave their bright heads in the breeze as if our steps to greet.

So full of sap and strength they spring forth from the woodland
 side,
As if they held some power within, long with us to abide.
Too exquisite their beauty seems to own a mortal birth,
Fairies have ta'en the form of flowers to dwell upon this earth.

* * * *

Since then a few revolving days had wheeled in rapid flight;
When once more eye and feeling yearned to view the charming
 sight.
I reached the spot to see with strange amazement and dismay,
That all the company of flowers had, dreamlike, passed away.

Are there not hopes and cherished joys that decorate life's way?
The bluebells of those earlier years that promised long to stay.
So strong they seemed we were compelled to revel in their light,
And woke one morn to find them gone—fled like a dream of night.

Could we in patient hope await until another year,
This lovely multitude within the forest would appear.
So in the woodland of the heart, bare winter will not stay,
And other joys will take the place of those now passed away.

KITTY OF THE "FROZEN BAR."

SOME years ago the "Frozen Bar" was a very favourite house of entertainment at Kimberley. At first a mere bar, rooms had been added to it and it had prospered and grown into an hotel. So far as it was possible for an iron house on the Diamond Fields to be kept cool it was worthy of its name. There was plenty of ice there when ice was to be obtained, and even when the ice machines had broken down, as they constantly were doing, the bottles were kept cool by cunning devices known to its proprietress. However dusty and hot it was outside, pretty little Kitty was behind the bar looking after her business, fresh, bright, clean, and cool, and the sight of a clean and cool human being in a Kimberley dust-storm was always refreshing.

The "Frozen Bar" was used by men who would by no means frequent common bars and rub shoulders with the very questionable characters who were to be met with there. Jim Pallatter, the gambler and sharper, never hung round the "Frozen Bar" to find some one who would first shake the dice for drinks, and afterwards, to wile away the time, throw for sovereigns. His self-assurance was proof against a good deal, but Kitty's quiet way of letting him know that his room was preferred to his company was too much for him. Illicit diamond buyers, as that section of the Kimberley public who live by buying stolen diamonds are called, did not care to use the "Frozen Bar" unless they were prosperous and in the higher walks of the trade. Situated near the diamond market and the mine it was thronged by a crowd of men very representative of Kimberley. Men came there dressed in every description of costume, from moleskins, flannel shirts, and slouch hats to suits of London-made clothes sent out from home by West End tailors. You would see the rugged weather-worn faces of men who had been diggers all over the world wherever the earth had yielded gold or precious stones, and the dark, hungry-eyed, bird-of-prey-like faces of Jews who are drawn to the spot where men find precious stones as vultures are drawn to a corpse. It was in the afternoon, just after luncheon, that the place would be most crowded. Then Kitty would be in her element, taking money, though more often "good-fors," answering questions, chaffing and laughing over the news of the day—the latest scandal or the best joke against some one—and making comments upon it

very often more humorous than polite. Poor, bright, cheery, big-hearted little Kitty, though she used to laugh at stories she ought not to have listened to, and make remarks which were not over-womanly, she had a woman's tender heart. In the early days of the Fields when hardships were greater and the ups and downs of life were more marked there were many who had good reason to be grateful to her. She had been a friend in need to many a man who from illness or accident had been pushed down and was likely to be trampled upon in the fierce race for wealth which goes on in the first days of a rush to a new digging. Amongst the boarders at the "Frozen Bar" there were often two or three whose "good-fors" did not seem to be very valuable, but to whom Kitty was just as civil as to her most solvent customers.

She was nearer thirty than twenty, and her life had been rather a hard one, though it had left very few traces on her bright little face, and her troubles had not made her laugh less cheery or her smile less kind, though perhaps they had caused that dash of cynicism which sometimes showed itself in her talk. She had begun life as a ballet-girl in a London theatre, had travelled half over the world with a theatrical company, and at Cape Town had married a Diamond-field man who had taken her up to Kimberley.

Her husband, whom she had never cared much for, was anything but a satisfactory one. But her married life did not last very long. Less than a year after her marriage a middle-aged female arrived on the Diamond-fields and laid claim to her husband, and as she was a person of great determination and was able to prove that she had married him some years before in London, she carried him off in triumph, leaving Kitty to find out whether or no a bad husband was better than none at all. Kitty would probably have answered this in the negative, for she was very well able to take care of herself. She started the "Frozen Bar" and prospered there, and if she had only been good at saving money would have become quite a rich woman.

"Has Jack been in here to-night, Kitty?" said a man who, with some others, had come in one evening before going home; "he has come back from the river and is in the camp again." A troubled look came across Kitty's face as she answered, "Which Jack? there are so many of them about." "Jack Hope." "Ah, I saw your friend Mr. Jack Hope just now at the 'Corner Bar' as I passed," said another man; "he was with a nice crowd—Jim Pallatter, Ike Sloeman, and all that lot. He has become a regular loafer. I shouldn't be surprised to hear that he was run in any day, for he is always with the illicit lot."

"What do you mean by talking about my friend?" said Kitty. "I have no friends, only customers; but he used to be a friend of yours. Why don't you fellows do something to keep him straight?"

"No good," "Gone too far," "Ought to clear out," were their answers to Kitty's question; but one or two men looked rather guilty, for Jack Hope once had been a popular man on the Fields and had had a good many friends.

"Clear out indeed! where to? To the devil for all you care. That is so like you men; that is how you stick to a friend."

"Listen to Kitty; why, she seems to be quite sweet on Jack Hope. Look out, Kitty; he would drink up the profits pretty quick," said a little Jew who had been listening to the conversation though no one had been speaking to him.

An angry flush came across Kitty's face. For once, she could not think of a neat retort, and she answered, showing that she was hurt, "Look here, Mr. Moses or Abrams or whatever your name is, I never spoke to you; he wouldn't take your help, and no one expects you to help a man."

"Don't know about not wanting my help; he is glad enough to be helped by some very queer people," said the little Jew as he walked out of the place, grumbling out something about never coming in again.

"Hope may be a fool, and he may have gone to the bad, but I hate to hear a little cad like that sneering at him," said Kitty; and then feeling that she had perhaps made rather a fool of herself she changed the conversation, and in a minute was laughing at some rather pointless story, chaffing another man about some joke there was against him, and seeming to be in the wildest spirits.

"What good fun that woman is; such a lot of 'go' in her," said one of the men who had left the place to another as they walked home together. "I don't like to hear her," said the other, a man whose ideals were somewhat higher, though his habits of life were even more irregular than those of most men on the Diamond Fields. "She is such a good little woman—a deal too good to talk as she does."

These men would have been surprised if they had seen the woman they were talking about whom they had left in such high spirits. The place was empty, she leaning with her elbows on the bar and her shapely hands covering her face, sobbing as if her heart would break. Yes, she thought, she was a fool to have cared anything for him or any other man. Were they not all either hard, selfish, and heartless, or reckless, prodigal, and hopeless?

With all her knowledge of the world she had let herself care a great deal for Jack Hope, the ne'er-do-well and loafer whose fate his old friends had been discussing. What they had said was probably true, she thought, it was no use doing anything for him. She had tried to help him. It was her money which had started him upon a prospecting trip down the river; but it was no good, he had thrown the work up and was back again in the camp. Yes, they

were right, there was not much chance for him: his associates were about the worst lot in the camp. He seemed to be going the road which has taken so many a Kimberley man to the prison, yet she couldn't leave him to travel it. Ah, what a fool she was, she thought. She had forgotten to call her boy to shut the place up though it was late and she hears a step at the door. At once she wipes her eyes and looks herself again.

The late customer is a man about five-and-twenty. Once he must have been very good-looking, and even now his face has some of its old grace about it. Now, however, it tells a very ugly story plainly enough. It is haggard and worn with drink and dissipation, and he has a reckless, defiant expression as if he refused to show a shame he felt. Even for the Diamond-fields his dress is rather careless. One of his eyes is discoloured, while on his other cheek he has marks of a more recent cut. Any one who knew colonial life could sum him up. An Englishman well-born who has gone to the bad; a type of man to be met with all over the colonies, who has been sent abroad so that he should not disgrace his people at home.

Staggering up to the bar he asks Kitty how she is and calls for a drink. There is rather a sharper tone than usual in her voice as she tells him that it is too late and that she is going to close. "You had better go back to the 'Corner Bar,' that is more in your line than this place, isn't it?" she adds.

"All right," he says, "I will clear out. I suppose I am not good enough for this shanty. So good night."

"Stop," she said, changing her mind as he turned to go away; "you needn't be in such a hurry, I want to ask you something. What are you doing—where are you staying now?"

"Staying? Oh, anywhere. I slept on the veldt last night; I am going to sleep at old Sloeman's place to-night. He is a good sort, is old Sloeman—don't turn his back on a man because he is down on his luck. I am going to work with him."

Mr. Sloeman was the owner of some claims in one of the mines which nobody else had ever made pay, but in which, without doing much work, he managed to find a great many diamonds. He also was the proprietor of a canteen of more than shady reputation, and had an interest in one or two Kafir stores. Some people were unkind enough to suggest that his diamonds were bought at the canteen and stores from Kafirs who had stolen them from their masters. He had been from time to time very charitable in finding work for young men who were out of employ. A good many of these young men had afterwards attracted the attention of the detective police and found their way to the prison.

"Stop, Jack, you are not going up there to-night. One of my rooms is empty, you can have that. I wouldn't go up there to-night," said Kitty.

Jack said he would go—he was expected there.

"Stop, Jack, you're not so bad that you can't talk sense. You know what old Sloeman means, and what his game is. You have always been straight whatever they can say of you. Don't have anything to do with that old thief!"

"Yes, and a lot of good being straight has done me. Old Sloeman is a good deal better than the lot who turn their backs on me, and thief or not, I am going to work with him!"

"Well, Jack, have a drink before you go. I am sorry for what I said just now. We will have a drink together," said Kitty as she took down a bottle of whisky and some soda-water. Jack did not refuse—he seldom did refuse such an offer.

"Heaven forgive me!" said Kitty to herself as she more than half filled a tumbler with whisky. "That will just about finish him, but he shan't go up there to-night."

"That is rather a stiffish drink," he said as he finished it. Then he had another and forgot all about going up to Sloeman's, and Kitty called her Kafir boy to shut up the place and put Jack to bed in the spare room.

"The *baas* in the spare room he plenty had this morning, missis," said Kitty's Kafir servant to her next morning as she was having her breakfast.

"Take him this, he will get all right," said Kitty, giving him some brandy in a glass and a bottle of soda-water. "That won't hurt him, though he will have to knock it off and pull himself together, for this child is going to look after him," she added to herself.

Very soon the Kafir came back. "The *baas* he drink the brandy and throw de soda at me. I think him going mad," he said rubbing his head.

Kitty was not much alarmed; she had seen a good deal of that sort of thing. She wondered whether it would be any good, if it were possible, to persuade Jack to become a Good Templar. She felt afraid that it would not be very easy and that he would shun the rejoicing there would be over him. He wanted some one to keep him straight, she thought, and woman-like, she began to believe that one of her sex could do it. After some time Jack came out of his room. He had a blank stare on his face and said nothing, but walked into the street without his hat on. He was evidently queer, very queer, Kitty thought, as she led him back to his room and then sent her boy for the doctor.

"He is in for a bad go of fever; rather a nasty case—typhoid symptoms; knocked his constitution to bits with drink," said the doctor. "He will want a lot of looking after. He had better go to the hospital—the free ward—the paying wards are full; not that they would be much in his line if they were not," he added.

"I think he had better stay here, doctor," answered Kitty. "I will see after nursing him; you know, doctor, nursing is rather my forte."

"No one can see after him better than you, my dear," said the doctor, who knew Kitty well. "I fancy, however, he won't be a very profitable boarder for you; but that's your look out."

"Oh, that is all right," said Kitty. "Come and see him again soon, doctor; remember I sent for you."

The doctor said he would come round again soon and drove off—thinking what a good little woman Kitty was, and wondering whether there was anything more than pity in her feeling for that ne'er-do-well, Jack Hope.

"I trust she don't care for him, for I am afraid there would be only trouble in it for her however it turned out," he thought to himself.

The doctor was right; it turned out a very nasty case of fever, and for weeks it looked very black. For the time the "Frozen Bar" lost its popularity. Kitty was hardly ever there, and when she was there was very little fun in her. She was always afraid that her customers would make too much noise. The old merry, almost reckless, look had left her and there was a more tender and soft expression in her face. She spent most of her time in a room behind the house—the coolest and best bedroom she had. Its late tenant, one of her most solvent boarders, had been somewhat disturbed and a good deal affronted at being moved out of it. But Kitty was determined to have it for the sick man, who for weeks was tossing on the bed in delirium. For a long time he did not recognize her or know where he was, and was a boy at school or a cadet at Sandhurst again. Then the delirium left him and he knew her, though he hardly seemed to ask himself were he was or how she came to be looking after him. Perhaps the hours that poor little Kitty spent nursing him as he got better were some of the happiest in her life. Then he was never happy when she was away from him, and he used to watch her as a sick dog watches its master. He seemed so different, so much more like what he had been once and so unlike what he had become on the Diamond-fields. When he grew stronger and able to talk about how he became ill, tears came into his eyes when he thanked her for her kindness. "If it had not been for you I should have gone up to old Sloeman's place at the West End, and if I had not died there should have become one of his lot," he said; "how good you have been to me."

As he grew stronger she began to think that he knew her secret, and there was something in his face which seemed to tell her that he felt something more than gratitude for her. Then she hardly ever came near him. He did not want any more nursing, she thought. One day he had got up, and she had been talking to him in her old cheery manner, telling him that he could pull himself together, and do as well as any one else, when what she had been half expecting came.

"Hers was the only influence," he said, "which could keep him

straight. He knew she cared for him. If she would marry him he would be able to keep away from drink."

She told him the truth; she did care for him. She would marry him if he wanted it, and would care to marry her. But he must show her first that he could reform. She knew that she was no "great shakes," she said, but she wasn't going to marry a man she could not trust to keep away from drink.

He promised that he would reform, and it was agreed that they were to wait for a year and then they were to be married and leave the Diamond-fields, and go to some other colony. He was no great prize, this shattered invalid, who was far more likely than not to return to his old ways. But Kitty, for all that, had a hard struggle with herself not to take him as he was, instead of waiting and perhaps losing him altogether. "No, she would not marry him there, it wouldn't be fair to him," she said, "she would wait till he was the man he was before he ever took to drink, and then if he cared to marry her she would be the proudest woman in the world."

Then she talked over a plan she had for him. She had bought some claims in the mine, he must work them for her. She was sure the ground would turn out well, and they would make lots of money.

That is how Jack Hope, who had utterly gone to the bad in the opinion of most men who knew him, got a start again.

Of course, their claims ought to have turned out well, and they ought to have found a big diamond, which would have made their fortune all at once. But Kitty's belief in the claims proved to be rather unfounded: some weeks they paid expenses, some they did not. Jack Hope ought at once to have become a reformed character, but he did not. More than once work was at a stand-still in their claims for days, and he had to come to Kitty, shame-faced and haggard, with a sad story of transgression to tell. But she persuaded him to try again, and did her best to keep him straight, and at last he became stronger and better. Men began to think that he had some chance, he had been steady for a long time. Kitty was going to succeed in making something of him. He began to take some pride in himself, and at the end of twelve months he was a better man than he had been for years.

At that time there was an outbreak of Kafirs and Griquas on the border of the province, and troops were raised on the Diamond Fields. There was plenty of military enthusiasm. Times were bad, and the Diamond Fields answered to the call for men to serve their country at five shillings a day. Store-keepers who could supply uniforms, and transport-riders who had waggons and oxen, came forward to help their country in its hour of need at a considerable profit to themselves. For Hope, the chance was just what he longed for.

Kitty did not try to prevent him from going out, for she thought

it was the best thing he could do. She knew all his history now. How he had got into some trouble at Sandhurst, and had been sent abroad by his stern old uncle, who had determined not to leave the family acres to one who, he thought, was certain only to bring disgrace upon his family. She thought it only natural that he should wish to volunteer and take the chance of showing that there was something in him. When the Diamond Field Horse left the camp she went out to see them off, and felt proud of her lover, as she saw him ride off in his troop. "He won't come back a trooper," she said to herself, "if there is much fighting to be done."

She was right about his not coming back a trooper. When there was any work to be done he was in the thick of it, and he had some opportunities of showing that soldiering was a trade he was fit for. Promotion, such as it is, comes quickly in a colonial corps, and when he came back he had a commission. He came back a new man, proud of and confident in himself. For years his life had been all down the hill, and until Kitty had stretched out her kind little hand to help him every one had been content to speculate as to how long it would take him to get to the bottom. Perhaps he would have hardly cared to think how much she had done for him. She was so fond of him and proud of him, it was only natural, he thought, but still it was gratifying. He was very pleased to see her again, and her bright little face and cheery manner were very charming to him. He, of course, was conscious that he was going to marry beneath him; still he got on with her better than he did with the few ladies he had ever met; for though he was a gentleman of excellent family he was not a very refined person. They were to have been married in a few weeks when the Zulu war broke out, and Jack was offered a commission in an irregular cavalry regiment, and he accepted it and went off again to the war, leaving Kitty to wait for his return and look after the "Frozen Bar." She prospered fairly well, though she began to encourage a class of custom which was not very remunerative. The warriors who had served with Jack and had plenty of stories to tell about him and themselves took to frequenting the bar, and Kitty would listen to these stories, somewhat to the neglect of gentlemen of the diamond market who, if their lives were less romantic, paid with greater regularity for what they had to drink.

There was a good deal to do in Zululand for the irregular horse, and when there was anything to be done Jack Hope was in his right place. He was present at Zlobani Hill on that fatal day on which so many of the light horse were killed. There were a good many brave deeds done that day, comrade risking life to save comrade in that wild rush from the Kafirs who had again out-manceuvred their white foes. Hope was cool and collected on that day, as he usually was in danger. As he rode

down the hill for his life he heard a shout behind him. A young Guardsman, who had come out on special service, had come to grief, his horse had been killed and the Kafirs were almost upon him. How Jack got through the Kafirs and managed to get away with the man he saved he hardly knows, but he did, and he brought him back to safety on his horse. A good deal was made of this, and perhaps all the more because the man he saved was the son of a great man. So Jack was much written about by special correspondents and talked about by society at home, and in time the news came out to South Africa that he was to be rewarded with the V.C.

One day Kitty heard this news at Kimberley, and was lent a packet of English papers which were full of accounts of Jack's deeds. She had taken the papers and one of Jack's letters which she had received some time before and had walked up to The Gardens (as a waste of land was called on which a few trees had been planted and a feeble attempt at gardening had been made); she wanted to be by herself to think it all over. She read about Jack in the papers that he was the nephew of the General Hope who was so distinguished in the Crimea, that he had been educated at Harrow and had afterwards gone to South Africa. Every one at home seemed to be proud of him, she thought, as she read a gushing leader about him in one of the English papers. Of course she thought it a very beautiful piece of writing and wondered what all the classical quotations meant, and who the long-named persons to whom Jack was compared were. And this was the man who loved her—this hero, this brave soldier. How she wished she was different from what she was. A lady who would be fit for him, not a poor half-taught woman, who had lived a hard life amongst rough, coarse people, and had got the little education she had from the bits of plays she had learnt and the novels she had read, and the queer side of society which she had seen. Well, if she was the finest lady in the world, she thought, she would not be worthy of him. Cynical little Kitty, who was so well able to sum any one up at their right value, and whose estimates were seldom too favourable, had at last set up an idol which she bowed down before and worshipped none the less reverently because her experience ought to have taught her that it was made of rather poor clay. She had been sitting some time thinking over her past and wondering what her future would be, torturing herself by doubting whether he really did care for her or could care for her, and reading over his letter again and again when she heard Jack Hope's name spoken by some one. She was sitting on a bench by a cactus hedge; there were two men on the other side who were talking about him as a good many people in Kimberley were. "I know all about him," one man said, "he comes from the same part of the country that I do. He would have had his uncle, General Hope's property, only he got into some row at Sandhurst, and his

uncle said he had disgraced himself and turned him adrift. My people tell me that the general intends to have him back again and forgive him, he is so pleased at his getting the V. C. So he'd be all right only he has been fool enough to have got engaged to some woman out here. What's her name? That woman who keeps the 'Frozen Bar.'"

"By Jove! what a pity. She is not a bad little woman in her way, but one wouldn't care to introduce her to one's people at home as one's wife," said the other.

"Yes; I spoke to him about it when he was here last, but he didn't take what I said over well. I fancy he knew he was making a fool of himself and was sick of it, though it didn't matter then as there wasn't much chance of his uncle ever making it up with him."

Kitty did not hear any more as the two men walked on, little knowing who had overheard them and what a cruel wound their words had given. "Yes, he could not get out of it—he was making a fool of himself. That is what people would say and it would be true."

He had always talked of his English life as something that was past and gone which could never return to him; but now she understood that was all different.

She could remember something in his manner when she last saw him which she did not quite understand then; now she knew what it meant—he knew he was making a fool of himself.

Now, when he had distinguished himself, he would feel this all the more. She alone was keeping him from the life he was born for. Now when he knew what he was giving up what would he do? Would he come back to her out of pity or duty or a sense of honour, or would he desert her. No, he never should do that; she would never give him the chance. If he married her how often he would repent it; how often he would think of what he had given up for her. "Yes," she thought to herself as she walked back to her house with all the gaiety and happiness taken out of her life, "she saw her way, though where it would lead her she did not know."

Some weeks after Ulundi had been fought and the war was over Jack Hope was sitting in an arm-chair at the Crown Hotel at Maritzburg reading a letter from England. It was from his uncle, General Hope, and was to the point, as the old gentleman's letters usually were. He had heard of Jack's gallant conduct and was very pleased. He was content to let bygones be bygones and receive him again. He was to come back and live at the Hall and he would have the place eventually. The general went on to say that he had met some one who knew of Jack at Kimberley, and had heard an absurd story of his intending to make a disgraceful marriage with a barmaid. If he intended to do that he need

not answer the letter, otherwise he had better come home as soon as the war was over. Jack read the letter over and over again with a troubled expression on his face. He did not like to give Kitty up. He was bound not to. He remembered, and it was not a very pleasant memory, all she had done for him and what he probably would have been if she had not again and again helped him up after he had slipped down. Then, what a jolly little woman she was and how devoted she was to him. He had lots of money in his pocket; every one thought him a very fine fellow; he would do what he liked. He would not give Kitty up and he would tell the general so. He would sit down and write at once.

As he sat down to write he began to see the other side of the question. How much he was giving up—a fine old place, as good a position as a man could want, and instead of that he was to end his days in South Africa or in some other colony. His V.C. would not be much good to him unless he stuck to colonial soldiering, which was a poor life. No, he would put off writing the letter. Then he remembered that he had not heard from Kitty for some time. She used to send him every week a funny, ill-spelt letter, in which the news of the camp was told very humorously. He would walk to the Post Office. On his way he met several men he knew who were just going home. How he would like to go too; it was useless trying not to regret. There was a letter from Kitty. It was dated from Cape Town. At first he hardly understood it as he read it:

"DEAR JACK,—

"It is all a mistake there being anything between you and me. We don't suit. Your people would have nothing to do with me, and you had better go home to them, now that every one must be proud of you. You would break down as a returned prodigal if you had to answer for me as well as yourself. Don't answer this letter, for I am sick of the country and before you get this shall have cleared.

"KITTY."

Jack read the letter again and again; it would be difficult to describe what his feelings were. He felt half mortified to think that she could have persuaded herself to give him up. Then he saw that she was acting for his good, and for a minute or two he had determined to find out where she was and to follow her. But it would be no good. After all, the strongest feeling he experienced was one of relief. He had got out of it. He had time to answer his uncle's letter, and he ought to answer it by the next mail, and he would. He needn't say anything about Kitty. Of course he never would forget her, and perhaps—well, anyhow, he would go home.

Jack Hope did not write to his uncle by that mail, he went

home by it instead. He received a warm welcome from his uncle, for he had atoned for his sins and was a nephew of whom any one might be proud. He sometimes thought about Kitty, but it was no use trying to find her, and about a year after he had come home he was engaged to marry a lady of very excellent county family and considerable property, who was fascinated by his good looks and his romantic history. Yet he might have found Kitty. She never went very far, for she somehow knew that his search after her would not be very determined. She stayed in the colony until she saw Jack's name in the list of passengers home, and then returned to the "Frozen Bar." She is there still. She has made a fortune and lost it again speculating in shares. She is a little more bitter and hard than she was. "Seems soured by dropping so much over shares!" is the opinion of several Diamond-fielders. However, she does a good many kind actions, and will do a good turn to many a man who is down on his luck, though she is not likely to have a more tender feeling than pity for any one.

DALRYMPLE J. BELGRAVE.

HEAVENWARD.

I.

“Look eastward,” cried the watchman,
“My master’s lances gleam,
The glorious beams of dawning day
Upon his falchions stream ;
See, glittering in uncertain light,
Full many a spear at rest,
While bright the star of glory shines
Upon each gallant breast !”
But she said, “It is the clouds that wait,
Expectant round the orient gate,
Refulgent in the dawning ;
He cometh not from thence.”

II.

“Look northward,” cried the watchman,
“Where mountains meet the sky,
The snow-white banners of my lord
Rise up all gloriously ;
Across the mountain’s rugged path
Caught by the wind they sway,
And seem to mingle with the clouds
As fold by fold gives way !”
But she said, “It is the snowdrifts white
Which ever crown the mountain height,
And glitter in the sunshine ;
He cometh not from thence.”

III.

“Look southward,” cried the watchman,
“For now from thence I hear
The thund’ring of a martial drum,
And trumpets shrill and clear,

And warlike chargers' trampling hoof
Triumphant spurn the ground,
And clarions ringing to the sky
With vict'ry's joyful sound!"
But she said, "It is the south wind free
That wantons with a restless sea,
The waves impatient chafing;
He cometh not from thence."

IV.

"Look westward," cried the watchman,
"For he will come to-night,
The twilight grey is dimming fast
The long dull line of light.
Yes, even now I see him stand
Beside yon ancient stone,
His armour glitters in the dusk,
He comes to thee alone!"
But she said, "It is a hoar-frost tree
That rises up mysteriously
And glimmers in the evening;
He cometh not from thence."

V.

But when o'er earth and ocean
Did holy vesper burn,
As by the window still she watched
To see her lord return,
A priest into the chamber came
And to her whisper'd low,
"Look heavenward, in that far off land
Thy warrior waits thee now."
Then like a ghost that walks in white,
She stole into the dim lamp-light,
And she said unto the watchman,
"Look forth no more to-night."

THE MISSING BOAT.

A GROUP of ruddy, good-featured, strong-built men were gathered one stormy forenoon of late December in front of a cottar's barn near the crest of a long steep incline, whence an unbroken view of the snow-clad country southwards could be had for a distance of nearly thirty miles, till bounded by a chain of hills forming a natural separation between Caithness and Sutherland. Here a straggling cluster of unpretentious houses, large and small, old and new, mostly of the cheaper description, and of hard, blue whinstone, constituted the village, though other cottar steadings that thickly besprinkled the landscape were included within the village name. The men were on the lee side of the barn, sheltered from the furious nor'-easter that was carrying clouds of whirling snow in its fitful grasp, and raising spotless banks and buttresses in all directions, across roadways and against walls of houses. Round about their feet a flock of sparrows were merrily picking up the oat grains that flew out through the upper half of the barn door from under the cheersome and steady stroke of the flail; while outside their circle a shy robin hovered as if doubtful about mingling himself with the *mobile vulgus* of his feathered tribe. The group of men were gazing towards the foam-flecked sea, near where the Noss Head lighthouse on its long promontory bounded the opening of the bay into the German Ocean. One was looking through a telescope rested on the shoulder of another man, from which, after a time, removing his eye, he handed the glass to another of the group, remarking:

"I canna mak' oot onything, boy. Sometime I think there's a black speck topping the waves, and then it's lost in the hollows. Ye have younger eyes, maybe ye'll see better. A wild sea, to be sure, for anybody to be out on!"

The younger man now in turn rested the glass on the shoulder of another and peered long and silently through, till at length an ejaculation escaped him.

"No doubt about it; there's something there! A black speck, as Donald says, I can make it out clearly; whiles it's lost, but always come up again. I much misdoubt but it's the boat, and the last we'll see o' the puir fellows. Expect that's her, keel up."

One after another now peered eagerly through the glass, and each in turn confirmed the impression of the preceding.

The boat in question, it appeared, had gone out fishing the day previous, and had probably been caught in the storm and dismantled, as nothing was heard of her since. And now the news ascertained through the telescope, and apparently confirmatory of previous impressions, spread rapidly through the village, and three families mourned their loss: one of two bread-winners, father and son; another of a son; the third, a young widow, the loss of her one-week wedded husband. But still, the grief which overwhelmed them was mingled with a faint element of doubt. Nothing was certain. All might yet perhaps turn out well. The boat might have been driven to take refuge in some distant port, not an unusual occurrence. But this thought carried no conviction. It was but the straw to the drowning man, and against it was the dark ominous speck on the waters. No ordinary fishing-boat could live there long.

The day passed gradually by. The dark speck still kept riding upon the waves near where it had been first seen, but its nature could not be verified, as no boat could venture out in such a sea. Still the drift whirled wildly through the air, more wildly, if anything, than ever, and deepened upon the ground, and all day long groups of people succeeded each other in sheltered places to gaze and gaze again seawards; individuals came to their doors to scan vainly the object that kept rising and falling near the horizon line, and which seemed to realize their worst forebodings; and night closed down over the village and grief-stricken families, and still the same element of doubt mingled with their despair.

Next morning a bright, warm sun rose up over the white landscape, and all the wild fury of yesterday had given place to peace and quietude. Before the window of a neat and tastefully-kept cottage sat a buxom rosy-cheeked girl, the young bride of a week, whose husband was among the missing. Her head was buried in her hands in an attitude of deep grief, and she seemed all unconscious of the cheerful landscape outside, of the robin that carolled his merry song on the roof-edge, of the warm sun that streamed through the polished glass over the flowering geraniums beside her and on to the back of the great glossy grey cat that sat purring contentedly on the hearth in front of the glowing peat fire. She seemed unconscious, too, of the kindly neighbour-woman who had come in for company, and who maintained a silence too delicate to intrude upon the exclusiveness of her sorrow. After a long stillness, broken only by the purring of the cat and measured beat of the clock on the mantelpiece, a soft utterance of the neighbour-woman caused the girl suddenly to raise her head and look out through the window in the same direction in which the other was already looking, as at some object of deep and growing interest, and presently her look of apathy gave place to one of absorbing concern. She was looking seawards as if she would fain probe the mystery of the treacherous ocean depths.

Two boats appeared cutting across the bay with the land breeze full in their sails towards a point some miles to the north of where the object had been seen yesterday floating on the waves; and on looking closely this object still appeared in a line with the boats, like a speck near the horizon rim. From the window groups of villagers were visible watching the boats, all with eager interest. The mystery of the floating object was now to be set at rest. Interest increases as the time passes and the boats draw nearer their goal, and intensifies as they seemed to have reached it and lower sail. Then there is a period of suspense during which they appear to be engaged with it, and soon again they raise sail and appear to be returning home. They are moving more slowly, however, apparently from the drag of the inverted boat, which they seem to be towing behind them, and they are bearing some points to the north, as if to get the wind full in their sails to reach shore before nightfall.

Gradually they verge northwards till they pass out of sight of the young watcher at the window, whose brief-lived interest vanishes, her head droops again upon her hands, and she subsides into the same tearless apathy and indifference. The brief winter sun of that northern county is sloping towards the horizon as the boats approach a narrow sandy creek or cleft in the wild, rock-bound coast, some distance north of the village, towards which there has been a great move of the villagers to meet them. The nearer the boats come the more the people are puzzled to account for the polished-looking surface of the object in tow, upon which the sun continues glancing as upon a mirror. At length they enter the creek and slowly ground upon the beach, towing the object after them amid the unbounded astonishment of the spectators, who presently are clambering up and over the polished epony surface of a huge dead whale of over sixty feet in length.

Such was the explanation of the apparently inverted boat, and the fate of the real boat still remained in mystery. The commotion in the village from the returning crowd woke the girl again from her apathy, and she drew near her doorway to learn as she expected the worst confirmation of her fears. The tidings were soon conveyed to her, but awakened little or no hope or interest. The time elapsed was too long now to admit of that. Just then the sun was tipping the hills in a crimson glory as he descended to his rest, and his influence seemed to diffuse itself over the girl as she involuntarily stood still in her doorway to gaze towards him. Figures in her line of vision seemed to mingle themselves in a mirage, or, growing nearer and larger, to disappear like the phantoms of a spectroscope. Her thoughts were elsewhere, and she was but dimly conscious of what she saw. Unobserved, a figure, outlined against the sunset, was advancing across the fields and growing rapidly upon her vision, till, with a sudden start, she found her whole attention unconsciously caught

and arrested by it. The figure, that of a stalwart young man, was by this time ascending the incline towards the village. The nearer he came the more intense grew the interest of the watcher till her breath seemed to stand still with suspense. A fluttering of a handkerchief, and in an instant she is flying towards him, and the meeting between husband and wife is such as might be supposed after one week of wedded happiness, and when he had returned, as it were, from the dead—a meeting which is best left to the imagination of the reader.

It seemed the boat had been forced to drive before the storm, and had been swept round by the Pentland Firth with its boiling tide till she got into the lee shore off the west coast of Scotland, and had then managed to get safely into one of the ports of Sutherlandshire—at a time when there were no telegraphs or railways in that region. Thence the bearer of the tidings had at once set off on foot to relieve the terrible anxiety of his young wife and of the other families, while the rest of the crew remained with the boat to bring her round as soon as wind favoured. There was feasting and rejoicing that night in the village over the safety of the lost ones, and the metamorphosis of the seeming ill-omen that had brought so much added grief for a time into an unexpected wind-fall of good fortune in the shape of the large profits from the oil and whalebone embodied in the leviathan.

W. S.

ON OUTLYING PICKET: A NIGHT ADVENTURE.

DURING a recent and, on the whole, somewhat "tame" campaign the writer shared in the excitement and alarm called into being by an incident which is the subject of this brief paper. Among other things, the occurrence in question very clearly demonstrated the vast difference that exists between outpost duty as practised at home and as carried out in the presence of the enemy, even should the latter not be of an enterprising character. Pickets, whether "inlying" or "outlying," are of course at all times a part of the ordinary duty of the soldier. We had been well accustomed to watch the movements of imaginary foes among the elms of Hyde Park, or on that scene of a hundred battles, the country in the neighbourhood of Aldershot. Such duty, however, assumes a considerably more trying nature when one's reflections may at any moment be interrupted by the whizzing sound of a passing bullet, or by the terror-striking cracks of bursting shells; and when, in the confusing obscurity of night, almost every bush seems to take the form of a hostile marksman looking for a suitable object on which to expend his cartridges.

Some three days after the army had disembarked in a land which, first and last, has been prolific of campaigns, about a hundred men of our regiment were detailed to act as an outpost on the ensuing night. At this time the enemy's forces were encamped two miles distant from the spot whereon our tents had been pitched. Though no serious encounter had yet taken place, shots had been exchanged on preceding nights by the advanced pickets; and as the surface of the country was covered with rank vegetation it was extremely difficult for our sentries to descry the approach of sharp-shooters, who had once or twice come near to bringing down certain of these isolated men. Accordingly, very stringent orders had been issued concerning the vigilance of the members of pickets; and we started off in the evening, not without some apprehension regarding the probable events of the night.

Having marched for a mile or farther over partially cultivated land, dotted here and there with deserted mud habitations, we at length arrived on a line of railway, which at that period seemed to be recognized as the boundary between the territories held by the opposing armies. It was yet broad daylight, and afar off we could now see the white tents of the enemy; nearer at hand several of his horsemen were posted among the reeds and brush-

wood, the white uniforms of these videttes rendering their positions peculiarly conspicuous. A rude battery had been constructed on "our" margin of the railway. It was made of sand-bags and rough planks, and being situated on a slight eminence, commanded (by day at least) a good prospect of the mostly flat surrounding landscape. Into this stronghold we directed our steps—or rather, our steps were directed by the officer in command; and the "old" picket, which had been on duty during the day evacuated the place in our favour. The officer above mentioned in the first place delivered a lecture, exhorting the men to practise the keenest vigilance, and describing the mode of action to be adopted in certain more or less unpleasant contingencies. In the case, for instance, of isolated sentries being attacked in the bush, they were to retire slowly, while turning to fire upon their assailants when a good opportunity presented itself. But before taking offensive measures they were to challenge three times, so as to minimize the danger of firing on a "friend." We were to be distributed in small detachments along the railway embankment, and our rifles were to be carried loaded. This latter circumstance was in itself a matter of solicitude; for the present military rifle has a distinct tendency to explode if not handled very cautiously. Warning was given as to the possibly disastrous results of a false alarm, such as might easily occur in the case of a shot being fired without sufficient reasons; but nothing appeared more likely than that somebody's piece would "go off" unintentionally before morning.

During the few minutes that had elapsed since we took possession of the sand-bag battery it had become very dark; for in these regions night falls in a surprisingly sudden manner. It fell to the writer's lot to form one of a party of four men under a sergeant, who were to act as a "connecting-link" between two more numerous bodies. At length we reached our destination, a point of the railway embankment having in front a level, marshy tract of low-lying ground, and in rear a thick and luxuriant forest of bulrushes. Though the night was obscure, it was possible to see pretty clearly what was going on in front; and we imagined that we should have little difficulty in detecting the approach of even a single individual. For some time not a sound was heard, with the exception of the persistent croaking of many frogs in the grove of bulrushes behind. Then we began to distinguish, amid this monotonous music, the neighing of horses in the distant camp of the enemy: we also heard the unmistakable clatter of artillery wheels, and at intervals the scarcely audible words of command in "changing guard." Still there was no appearance of outposts to our immediate front, and we lay on the side of the rails for several hours without adventure.

Those who are accustomed to night-watching of any sort are aware of the kind of half-asleep, half-awake feeling often ex-

perienced in what are sometimes called the "small hours." The writer was in this condition when he was roused by the sentry who stood between the rails saying in a suppressed tone to our commandant, "Look out; there's somebody at last!" Every eye was now strained in searching among the scrub for the alleged intruder; and every fore-finger instinctively sought the trigger of the Martini-Henry. Sure enough a solitary figure in white was slowly making its way through the tall, coarse grass in front, though still at a considerable distance from our position.

"Shall I try to drop that fellow?" asked the sentry, who had meantime "dropped" on his knee, and was laying a handful of cartridges convenient to his right hand on the ballast between the metals.

"No," replied the sergeant. "Wait till he comes closer, and then challenge him in the usual way."

The figure in white was gradually advancing, and that in the most confident manner. We could now see that he was swinging his arms in a fashion much affected by military men of our own nationality, and, what was very singular indeed, he seemed to carry no weapons. At length he arrived within speaking, or at least within shouting range, and was duly hailed by the sentry. No answer, however, was vouchsafed to that functionary's hoarse summons; and a second challenge was treated with precisely similar disdain.

"Now," said the sentry in an elated manner, "will I blaze away at him?"

"Certainly not. Challenge once more," said the sergeant.

While these words were being exchanged the subject of them halted in his curious march, and waved his arms about as if in imitation of the movements of a windmill. But he did not reply to the third and final summons, whereupon the sentry brought his rifle to his shoulder with the object of carrying out his "dropping" policy.

"Stop, stop! don't fire. We'll try some other plan with that fellow. I think he's daft," cried the sergeant. "Wait a little, and see what he'll do next," he continued.

The sentry, disappointed of what he probably anticipated would have been an excellent "pot," resumed his ordinary professional demeanour; and the man in white remained stationary, having completed his late evolutions. For some minutes affairs continued thus; but meanwhile the sergeant convened a council of war. He proposed that the man in white, whoever he might be, should be taken prisoner; and that though he was undoubtedly "entitled" to be shot, it would be hardly fair to fire upon an apparently unarmed personage. He reiterated his opinion that the intruder was "daft," and urged that as an additional reason why he should not be subjected to the test of powder and shot. We all, with the exception of the sentry, agreed with our superior officer's pro-

posal; and as the man had not resumed his advance, set to work to prepare a plan that would insure his capture. The sentry expressed his conviction that the man would certainly have a revolver about his person, and was in favour of falling on him with the bayonet. But as this would come to very much the same thing as firing on him, we dismissed our fire-eating comrade's plan and eventually resolved to pounce on our victim unawares, thoroughly secure him, and carry him in triumph to the sand-bag battery. Of course the sentry—whose name, by-the-by, was Atkins—demurred: he said that the man was no doubt a spy, and that if he wasn't shot now, he certainly would be when taken to the battery.

Our deliberations had to be quickly terminated, when we observed that the figure in white had recommenced his advance. Atkins, by way of a garrison, was left on the railway; and the main body, four in number, took to the bush at wide intervals apart. It was arranged that we were to converge on our prey, who maintained his usual steady pace. In due course we had him surrounded, the sergeant having contrived to fall a little to the rear of his line of march. Making a signal to the rest of us, that non-commissioned officer suddenly darted upon the man, grasping his white apparel in a pretty rough style.

Our amazement may be imagined when we saw before us a gentlemanly-looking person with nothing on but a white shirt. If we at first had any doubts as to his nationality, these were set aside by his asking in the most unconcerned tone, "What's up?"

Instead of having captured a soldier or spy belonging to our antagonists, we soon discovered that our prisoner was an English officer, who in his sleep had apparently been visiting the enemy's lines, and had been quietly returning to camp when his appearance caused us so much anxiety. When told of the proceedings of our little party on the railway embankment, the somnambulist probably thanked his stars that the sergeant had not permitted Atkins to put the ordinary rule in such cases into execution; for not having replied to the third challenge, he was, as the sergeant put it, quite "entitled" to be shot.

A TRAGEDY ON THE RIVER GUNDUCK, UPPER BENGAL.

THE first tinge of day was just beginning to deepen in the east as my friend Begg and I set out from my bungalow one December morning for a cruise on the river Gunduck. It was a glorious morning, one of those of which we have such a monopoly in the four cold-weather months of India, and the air of this early hour, the transition period from night to day, was the sharpest of the twenty-four. Delicate films of ice covered the little pools as we passed along, all to melt with the first bright glance of sun, and the grass was crisp and white with hoar frost. Passing through the labyrinths of the large native village that lay in our way, we could see the inhabitants on either side just beginning to be astir, and crouching round little fires lit in their verandahs as they circulated the early hookah. Our followers with guns and ammunition, and shivering even within their thick kumuls or quilts in which they were wrapped round to the eyes, looked as if they would fain have joined them and sat down to discuss the village news and gossip, as a preferable mode of passing the hour. And yet there was something delightfully bracing and mellow in the air which only those can thoroughly realize who have passed through the hot weather.

Mid-way in the village we reached the banks of the broad river, which had already cut deeply into it, and was fast cutting away, till soon the village, which had probably been there from time immemorial, with its altars, its temples, its consecrated trees, and traditions, would become a thing of the past. Clustering hovels, terraced buildings, and shops hovered on the brink, while others near at hand, also deserted, awaited their surely approaching fate. Among the victims of the current one huge sacrificial banyan tree, consecrated by the blood of uncounted kids without spot or blemish, had, unsaved by its protecting deity, toppled over into the deep turbid stream, and with its mighty network of roots all bared by the fallen earth and still partly clinging to the bank, was stemming the water with its branches. Others also stood on the brink trembling in the balance. Before us stretched away the river, a broad glassy sheet of nearly a mile across, smooth and placid as a mirror, while from its opposite shore extended nearly another mile of sand which the receding water had left high and dry. Beyond that still a mile or two more of tall rank grass and

reeds growing out of the drifted sand afforded good cover for deer of different kinds and wild pigs.

We now get into our boat. Guns and ammunition are duly put into safe quarters, and a couple of Palinuri of swarthy hue are shipped to steer and propel; and presently we are skimming silently up-stream in the direction of a flock of geese and ducks reported about a mile and a half upwards. Our reasons for being thus early astir were, as well to catch the early air of the morning, which is the most pleasant of the day, as that those birds get more and more shy as the day advances. Not a sound as yet broke the stillness of the morning except the splash of the oars by the two figure-heads in bow and stern, or the occasional faint bark of a dog; and one could not help thinking of a Scotch Sabbath, of which Indian country life in this respect is so strongly suggestive. Feeling as if there was something strangely out of keeping with the elasticity of the air in our sedentary idleness in the boat, and which rather inclined to strong muscular exercise, such as riding, running, or leaping, Begg and I took the oars from the mulahs and laid to them with a will. On we fly with redoubled speed, while clouds of tobacco smoke ascending from a couple of meerschaums counteract the clouds of mist that were now beginning to roll up off the river; and presently the sun, a huge red ball, begins to glow through the mangoe trees on shore. Soon we could hear the faint cackling of birds borne down on the water. This growing more and more distinct, we resigned our oars to the mulahs, and betook ourselves to our guns; and as the sun raised the mist off the river we could see our feathered friends, a tempting panorama, spread over the water about a quarter of a mile distant. There were several magnificent flocks of them, which a binocular showed to be birds of every feather and size, from the large geese and magnificent red-crested duck or laalseer down to the smallest teal. They spot us now, for some of the outposts are beginning to crane up their necks and eye us suspiciously. Our only chance is to keep nearly straight up river as if we were mild Hindoos paddling our grain boat, or mulahs in search of fish, and so gradually verge nearer till we get within range. Failing our smaller guns, we hoped at least to have a chance with "Mons Meg," a famous piece of sporting "artillery" lent me by a Shikari baboo. It was about 8 feet long and of corresponding calibre, and the charge was simply gauged out in handfuls. Still the birds allow us to approach, but they have dropped their careless chatter now, and are eyeing us warily. A hundred yards or two will bring us opposite them. Steadily we verge nearer, not a sound or movement to startle them except the steady splash of the oars, to which they are well used. We are within range of "Mons Meg" now, but we try to get still nearer till within range of the other guns also. By this time, however, the outpost teals are swimming in excited circles, and every moment we expect to see the dreaded signal

given by the rising of a solitary bird. Up rises one at length, then another, and another, till, with a rush like thunder, the whole flock are on wing, and "Mons Meg" unburdens herself into the thick of them just as they are clearing the water. Several birds answered to the summons by dropping down again, among which to our joy we saw some of the larger sized ducks, while one or two geese remained on the water, ere they had yet risen, flapping their wings. Another bird or two dropped to our breechloaders from a returning wedge that swept unwarily overhead. Counting our spoil, we found that "Mons Meg" had answered for five birds, while the other guns had dropped three, making a total of eight. Among these were two geese and three of the grand red-crested ducks, themselves like small geese. The rest were teal. While shipping these we were reminded in rather a startling manner of certain denizens of the water. Begg was reaching out his hand for the last bird, which lay lifeless on the surface, when suddenly it was plucked from his grasp and drawn under, and he felt glad his hand had not been seized along with it, for we knew this to proclaim the presence of crocodiles. Our success, however, was so far satisfactory; and pleasing visions of roast goose and "laalseer" duck—than which nothing is more savoury cooked directly they are shot—loomed in the near future.

As there was no chance of our beating up the same flocks again, we retraced our way down stream to look for others we had heard of a mile or so below our starting point. Every now and again clumsy-looking porpoises rolled heavily their huge bulk on the surface of the water, as they rose for air, or foraged about in pursuit of little fish that sometimes leaped in showers around them. A famous cure is their oil among natives for rheumatism, while their flesh is greedily eaten by the lower castes. Here and there on sandbanks reposed the long-nosed alligators of all sizes, from the mere infant of 2 feet to the patriarch of 8 to 10 feet long, all lying basking in the sun, motionless, like dirty logs of wood, except when their huge jaws opened to yawn or snapped together again like percussion caps. Sometimes the curious spectacle was seen of the jaws continued in a fixed gape at right angles, as if the attitude implied relief or enjoyment. Apart from these appeared more rarely solitary specimens of the snub-nosed species, the dangerous and dreaded man-eater. An occasional bullet striking close to its mark imparted sudden animation to the "loga," as they slid rapidly into the water. Begg was busy with his binocular sweeping the shores on either side for any sign of antelope or deer or perchance of a rare nil-gai or sambur that had strayed down from the jungles.

"Nothing there," he remarked; "neither antler nor bristle, nor even a 'squeaker' come down to the water to drink. Nothing can I see but a group of Hindoo women come down to their ghaut to bathe in quiet seclusion ere yet the sterner sex are about.

Evidently high castes they are." Continuing to sweep the shores, he crossed the group again, when a sudden exclamation escaped him. "A stampede among the women! It must be a crocodile. By Jove! It is so. One of them has been swept from her feet, and I can see her waving arms as she is being drawn into deep water. Heavens! her fate is sealed. Nothing can help her; and here we are powerless to do anything. Come along quick; on for our lives! We must try what we can. We may perhaps get a shot at the brute as he rises for air." And as quick as thought we bent to our oars and flew onwards. Even at this distance we could see the finely-moulded forms and rich olive complexions usually proclaiming the higher castes. The brief waving of the victim's arms, which Begg had seen, soon ceased as she was drawn out and under into deep water. Second after second passed, and, in the utmost suspense, we continued on the look-out for her re-appearance, as still we tore onwards with all the strength of the mulahs and our own combined, rapidly decreasing the distance. The group of women by this time had all gathered on the sand, and were gazing in wild alarm towards the water, gesticulating and beating their breasts. At length a speck appeared on the surface about midway between us and the shore, and one arm was thrown above, then the head and shoulders of the woman were visible as she still faintly struggled in the grip of the monster. For nearly a minute she remained above, then suddenly disappeared, before ever we were near enough to risk an aim that might avoid the woman and strike the mere speck of the crocodile's snout that now and then showed above water. Again the brute rose with his victim, now quite near to us, but only for a moment, and disappeared ere we could press our fingers on the trigger. We never got another chance of him. His cunning had espied mischief in our neighbourhood, and next time his horny snout appeared, it was after a long interval and far away. We knew he would never let us near him again. It was terrible thus to feel our utter helplessness amid the scene that was being enacted before our eyes—a young woman, in the midst of full life and health, snatched away in an instant to a death so horrible.

The others having watched the vain result of our efforts now fled in consternation to their village, and soon a crowd of villagers, with the friends and relatives of the lost woman, came hurrying down to the ghaut; the nearest female relatives giving vent to the loud wailing and demonstrative grief of their country.

We learnt from these that the victim was a young Brahmini woman, daughter of the chief baboo of the village, and who had been recently married. Her husband was there too, beating his chest and seemingly overcome with grief; though we doubted not the less, poor man, that he would soon set about consoling himself with another fair Brahmini and another marriage, according to the custom of similarly afflicted Hindoos and the caste law, which

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allows the high-caste widower, though not the unfortunate widow, to supply with another the place of the deceased.

A few days after this a crocodile appeared hovering around the bathing-ghaut, day after day, just showing his snout now and then above water, as if with whetted appetite he were laying in wait for fresh prey. He was evidently the robber. About this time my friend Begg called over again, and, hearing of the re-appearance of the enemy, together we concerted a plan of attack. Getting into our boat one early morning again we floated quietly down till we came nearly opposite the bathing-ghaut—deserted since the catastrophe—and then dropped overboard a small dead kid, within which was carefully concealed a treble-barbed hook connected by a chain with a coil of rope that lay within the boat. This bait, with a float attached, we let gradually drop astern till some thirty or forty yards of rope remained between it and the boat as we floated slowly down stream.

The crocodile, we learnt, had been seen that very morning, so our hopes were high. The only thing we dreaded was his “scenting a rat,” as they are desperately cunning, and suspicion once roused we might tempt them in vain. A large crowd of villagers stood on the shore, well away, silently watching proceedings.

Time passed, but not a ripple or speck on the glassy surface relieved our expectation, while we continued tacking slowly up and down stream with the bait in our rear. An hour passed and still not a trace of the enemy. Our patience is beginning to get exhausted when a slight lurch of the float is immediately followed by its disappearance. With all speed we now propelled the boat away so as to put a sudden strain on the rope, which presently tightening to its utmost showed that the enemy was hooked. A convulsion of the water and frantic plunging succeeded, during which head and tail of the reptile appeared alternatively above water as if in vain attempts to dislodge the secure hold of the hook.

Then a sudden, strong strain on the rope showed that he had put on steam. Off he went, towing us rapidly along at a pace that fully showed his strength and tried the quality of the rope, but after several hundred yards of progress under this novel motive power, gradually our speed decreased till at length we came to a stand-still. We found that the enemy had sunk to the bottom and was lying there. A tug on the rope brought him up again once more into full play, and the same pace is repeated with the same termination. Once he rose close to the boat and connecting us with his discomforts made straight for us, open-mouthed, till a crashing reception from Begg's oar made him turn tail in a semi-muddled condition; though not till he had inflicted upon us sundry impotent strokes from his powerful tail. His efforts, however, after this grew fewer and feebler, till they ceased altogether, and after about half-an-hour's tussle we drew him to

the shore, a helpless log, still gnashing his jaws with all the will but not the power for mischief.

In triumph the natives hauled him up on the bank, a truly formidable monster. He was one of the largest I ever saw, and measured 10 feet from snout to tip of tail; and the jaws and double row of teeth were such as might well make one shiver. Many were the execrations and multifarious the forms of Oriental Billingsgate and invective hurled by the natives upon the head of the ruthless marauder that had thrown gloom over their village, and for which all the copious metaphor of their country was exhausted. The relatives of the reptile, present, past and future, to at least the tenth generation, were defamed in the most opprobrious terms. As he lay there still alive, still savagely snapping his jaws, he looked as if he would fain even yet have a few of his defamers but a few minutes in the water. The work of Nemesis was claimed by the relatives of the deceased, who promptly despatched him; and the crowd, seemingly with their minds much relieved, and with triumphant tones in their voices, filed away towards their village, while some *chumars* at my bidding prepared to denude the reptile of his skin as a memento of the occasion. On opening him, too sure proof was found of his identity with the destroyer, as had been fully anticipated.

The demon of the bathing-ghaut having been destroyed, my friend and I also repaired to our bungalow, well satisfied at having removed what might have been long the scourge of the neighbourhood.

W. S.

WHITE ELEPHANTS.

THE gift or possession of a white elephant is a favourite figure of a misfortune, disaster, or catastrophe which has overtaken any one under the cover or pretence of profit, benevolence, friendship, or respect. Scarcely any other Oriental habit of thought or turn of expression has been so thoroughly assimilated or has passed so freely or frankly into Western circulation as that which refers to this *damnosa possessio* or *damnosa hæreditas*. It has worked itself easily into our daily conversation, our fiction, our moralizing, and our proverbial talk.

The *rationale* and basis of the figure is to be found in a habit referred to the king of Siam, who, when he had an enemy among his nobles whom he detested, but one whom it would not be politic to destroy publicly—one who must be despatched without long delay, but whose poison must be sweetened, and for whom the edge of the axe must be gilded—was accustomed to send him a white elephant. Not that the gift was one of either profit or pleasure, for the brute could not be shot, nor given away, nor put to mean uses of hire or labour. It was not permissible for him to carry a howdah or drag a plough. He was to be cared for and fed, and pampered, and adulated, and kept like some tougher-skinned Apis of the Egyptians, in the splendid idleness of a four-footed divinity. It was necessary that he should have his body-guard and his palace, his attendants and his flatterers. His huge feet might trample down crops and vineyards if it pleased him to walk that way, and his capacious trunk might draw up the last drop of water in the well for his morning bath while human souls were perishing from drought. All things were lawful for him, and he was to be cared for and indulged first of all the world; for he was the white elephant of royal favouring, to be received with gratitude and maintained with cost. In the end the expense of keeping him would be so inordinate that the receiver would be ruined and commit suicide, the white elephant having proved as efficacious for punishment as a bowstring or a bowl of poison—all the better, indeed, because the deadlier design was masked beneath the appearance of consummate favour.

There are reasons why the white elephant, as a rare variety of his species, should enjoy the prerogative of special homage and immunities, as well as considerations which have elevated even

the more ordinary type of elephant to a position of comparative dignity in the comity of animals.

To the mind which is at once well constituted and well informed, the elephant is the object of much the same kind of sympathetic interest as the Maori, the Red Indian, and other vanishing aborigines. The family of pachydermatous mammals of which he is a member, containing only a single existing genus and two species, are the sole surviving representatives of the order known to naturalists as Proboscidea. These two existing species of elephant are known by a broad geographical distinction—the African elephant, *Elephas Africanus*, and the Asiatic elephant, *Elephas Indicus*, which differ from each other in some essential particulars. The ears of the African elephant are enormously large, completely covering the shoulders when thrown back, and have been known to measure three and a half feet in length by two and a half feet in width. This species ranges over the whole of Africa south of the Sahara, with the exception of the Cape, where it formerly abounded, but from which it has been driven by the encroachments of civilized man. In height it somewhat exceeds the Asiatic species, and its tusks are also heavier, and occur in both sexes. Travellers have noticed, however, that the tusks are seldom alike, even in the same individual. As the average man uses his right hand in preference to his left, so the elephant is accustomed to work with a particular tusk, which is termed by the Arab traders *el hadam*, or the servant. The consequence is, that the one which is most used is also the most worn, and is usually about ten pounds lighter than the other.

The Asiatic elephant inhabits the wooded parts of the Oriental region, from India and Ceylon eastwards to the frontiers of China, and to Sumatra and Borneo. It chiefly abounds in the jungle, and probably on this account is less active and fierce than its African relative, of whom it is said—and the fact is frequently quoted as a proof of the general inferiority of the negro race—that no African people of modern times has succeeded in reclaiming this highly intelligent and naturally docile animal.

Notwithstanding that the great massiveness of the elephant's body constitutes him the largest of living terrestrial animals, he is in fact rather a degenerate descendant, collateral, if not lineal, of the huge creatures which are recorded amongst the fourteen species of the once flourishing genus *Elephas*, the fossil remains of which occur, together with a still larger number belonging to the allied genus *Mastodon*, in the tertiary formations, to which their remains are confined.

Of all the elephants now extinct, the mammoth is confessedly the most interesting, enjoying the hoary prestige of having co-existed with man upon the surface of this planet; where its remains have been found in occasionally almost perfect preservation, in company with numerous flint implements and other

utensils incidental to a circumscribed but ever-widening human life. At the beginning of the present century, for instance, a Siberian hunter discovered an entire mammoth, frozen in a block of ice; and another was subsequently found. Both specimens were so faithfully guarded against decay by the chilly medium of their transmission to later millenniums than their own, that it was possible to make microscopic sections of some of their tissues. They demonstrated the fact that the mammoth, unlike the elephants of modern times, was thickly clad in a covering of long dark hair, mixed at the roots with shorter hair of a woolly texture; and that it possessed a mane, with tusks of enormous length curved upwards to fully three-quarters of a circle. Its remains are found abundantly in England, and throughout the greater part of Northern Europe and Asia; being in Siberia so specially plentiful, and so well preserved, that the tusks form an important article of trade, and supply, as is asserted, nearly the whole of the ivory used in Russia.

The most ardent admirers of the elephant concede that he is a somewhat unwieldy animal; as well, indeed, he may be, when his limbs are called upon to support a carcase of some three tons in weight. It is manifest that extremities with such a responsibility must necessarily incline to the colossal rather than the slender, and to rigidity rather than to flexibility. It is probably owing to their straightness and apparent want of bending power—an effect produced by the greater nearness of the knees and elbow to the ground than in most other animals—that the legs of the elephant were for centuries believed either to be jointless, or to have such joints as were practically unserviceable. This delusion was further supported by the circumstance that the elephant often sleeps standing against a tree or a rock. It is this belief which Shakespeare seems to have incorporated when, in his "*Troilus and Cressida*," he makes Ulysses say, "The elephant hath joints, but not for courtesy; his legs are legs for necessity, not for flexure," or as the first folio edition has it, "for flight." The heroic Ajax is the typical "elephant" of the play. "Shall the elephant Ajax carry it thus?" asks Thersites, in a previous passage of the same act—that Ajax of whom Alexander, the servant of *Cressida*, had still earlier said, "he is valiant as the lion, churlish as the bear, slow as the elephant." Pope had not forgotten these heroic qualities when, in one of the celebrated couplets in which he seeks to make the sound explanatory and expressive of the sense, he writes:

"When Ajax strives some rock's huge bulk to throw,
The line too labours, and the words move slow."

There are people in these latter days whose mission it is to reverse every current, recognized, transmitted, or inherited opinion; to read backwards every character as it is inscribed,

hitherto without serious challenge, on the roll of fame and glory, or in the lurid pages of historic infamy. There have even arisen sceptics who deny the courage of the elephant, and scoffers who laugh at his traditional wisdom. The gigantic proportions of his head are turned against him ; and it is averred that the massiveness of his skull, and its height in front, to which the elephant owes something of what is allowed to be his sagacious aspect, are not due to the great size of the brain, which is relatively small, but to the enormous development of the bones of the cranium, rendered necessary in order to give attachment to the powerful muscles of the head and trunk. Shades of Gall and Spurzheim, where is phrenology in the light of such a bill of indictment ?

The stupidity of the elephant is pointed by the accusation of his want of stratagem ; whilst the accusation of the females in the same direction takes the form of an arraignment of their maternal discrimination. The unweaned young of a herd, and the mothers of a herd are said reciprocally to give and to receive the nourishment proper to infancy indifferently, but such a custom can scarcely be taken logically as anything more than an exercise of that common amiability which is natural or expedient in elephantine communities. For elephants are gregarious and polygamous, associating together in considerable herds from eight to fifty and even more, in which the larger proportion are females, under the guidance of a single leader whom they implicitly follow, and whose safety when menaced they are eager to secure.

The family code would seem to be that the offspring of the same sire may imbibe their necessary refreshment from that one of his consorts who may happen to be the most convenient. It was not intended to the credit of the good nature of Julius Cæsar that Decius should say of him, as formulated by Shakespeare, that

" He loves to hear,
That unicorns may be betray'd with trees
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,
Lions with toils, and men with flatterers."

If the uncouth rashness of the elephant forbids it to be regarded as majestic itself, it is frequently a remarkable factor in the majesty of others. To processions of state and religion, gay with every conceivable vividness of colour and splendour of caparison, it has imparted a pomp and dignity, a suggestion of power and a demonstration of solidity and magnificence not otherwise attainable. It has lent a fury, a terror, and a thunder of its own to the field of battle, to which it was introduced in the very earliest days, not to be reckoned by any calendar, of its domestication in the East. It is somewhat singular, however, that it is mentioned only two or three times in the "*Rig Veda*" by the name of *Mrigo-hasti*, the beast with a hand, and in such a way as to show that it was still an object of wonder and terror, although in subsequent literature

it is exalted as the mightiest and most magnificent of animals. In the second incarnation of Vishnu it occupies a prominent and highly symbolical position.

The bulk and tractableness of the elephant marked it out from the first for an instrument of the fraternal destruction of man by man, the earliest records showing that from time immemorial it was chiefly employed in war. Elephants thus figured in the armies of the kings of India, when these monarchs sought to repel the invasions of Alexander the Great and Tamerlane. In the Syrian armies, occasionally, the elephant seems to have been much employed. According to passages in the first book of the Maccabees, Antiochus, when warring against Judas Maccabæus, had in his army elephants guided by Indian drivers, each stated to have had on his back a strong wooden tower containing thirty-two fighting men. But this is almost certainly an exaggeration, for it would amount to a weight of two tons and a half, quite beyond what any elephant could easily carry.

In like manner the African elephant was in ancient times domesticated by the Carthaginians, and employed by them in their wars with Rome. It was this species which crossed the Alps with Hannibal, and which the Romans, after the conquest of Carthage, turned to account in the field, in the amphitheatre, and in military pageants.

The formidable appearance of elephants in the battle-field, however, was as much a terror of the imagination as of reality, and experience showed that they could not withstand the impetuous dash of well-armed, well-disciplined, and self-reliant troops. The sabres of the attacking forces aimed at their trunks—of the vital importance of which delicate organs the elephants are so conscious that they are exceedingly cautious in their use of them, preferring when in combat with the tiger to fight with them carried aloft and out of reach of their antagonist's claws—rendered the elephants totally unmanageable; and in the confusion that ensued they generally did more harm to their own side than to the enemy. Since the introduction of fire-arms the elephant has become of still less service as an instrument of war, and his chief employment as a belligerent is now found in the transport of baggage and the dragging of heavy artillery. Thus it is really his docility and resource rather than his rage that measures the modern importance of the elephant as a military factor; whilst in the mimic warfare of the chase his attitude gives a very appreciable consciousness of an approximate security to the hunter who follows his striped or spotted or tawny-maned quarry into the complicated depths of an Indian jungle.

In the vast peninsula, the government of which we hold in sacred trust, the elephant has been the civil engineer, the road-maker, the bridge-builder—in one sense, indeed, the *pontifex maximus*. An animal of his vast proportions, power, sagacity,

and tractableness imports a new and striking significance into the now commonplace expression of the dignity of labour, and his high mental and moral qualities invest with a strange respectability a creature who, by persons whose realism (*pace* the dames of the League) sees in a golden primrose only a golden primrose and nothing more, would be described as a beast of burden.

But to stop at a mention of the mental and moral qualities of the elephant would be to give him less than his due by an understatement of his virtues, for the elephant is himself religious. Nay more; it is long since he first achieved a reputation as a worshipper of the gods with a degree and quality of gratitude that approached to piety.

For ancient writers (as Pliny and Ælian) have recorded that elephants go forth from the haunts in which they seclude themselves in order to worship the new moon, and they add that in lifting their trunks in the air the elephants present the green branches of trees to that changeful planet-deity, and endeavour by such an offering to testify towards her their respect and submission. Some ancient authorities also agree that elephants, sharing in this particular the ritual of the Persians and the Peruvians, observe the custom every morning of saluting the sun by elevating their trunks, as if these were praying hands, with the view of commencing the day with an act of religious homage. By this habit of piety it was that the sun was induced, in his divine capacity, to take the whole race of elephants under his protection, and was, so to say, compelled to reject with indignation and abhorrence the sacrifice of elephants, which an uninstructed or infatuated gratitude sometimes caused to be made to him. Thus, for instance, when Ptolemy Philopator had immolated four of these favoured animals in honour of the sun, out of gratitude for the victory he had achieved over Antiochus the Great, of Syria, the god of day terrified him in a dream, and gave him to understand by threats and other tokens how thoroughly disagreeable to him had been the too ambitious holocaust. The offending Ptolemy was fain to order the expiatory casting of four elephants in metal, and the solar wrath was graciously appeased by this act of contrition and reparation.

The author of the "Pilgrim's Progress" was not disinclined to recognize an act of didactic piety in a creature so different from an elephant as the domestic fowl. Speaking of Christiana and her family at the house of the Interpreter, Bunyan says that the latter "had them then into another room, where were a hen and chickens, and bid them observe a while. So one of the chickens went to the trough to drink, and every time she drank she lifted up her head and her eyes toward heaven. 'See,' said he, 'what this little creature doth, and learn to acknowledge whence your mercies come by looking up.'"

It is the payment, therefore, with interest, of a compliment earned by the ancestral piety of remote ages, if not equally deserved by the piety of existing generations, that in the West the elephant gives his name to a Christian order of knighthood; and in the East is made the object, in the persons of rare and select representatives of his family, of something which cannot always be distinguished from religious veneration.

White elephants have at all times been objects of wonder and mystery to the Asiatic mind, and amongst the royal titles of Burmah and Siam is that of Lord of the White Elephant. Indeed, the presence of a white elephant in Siam is considered as a palladium for the king's life and for the prosperity of the State, while the absence of one is regarded as an omen of evil. Thus at the court of Siam a white elephant ranked next to the queen, and took precedence of the heir-apparent. Crawford saw six of these animals in the king's stables.

A white elephant is mentioned in the *Mahawanso* as forming part of the retinue attached to the "Temple of the Tooth" at Anarajapoorā in the sixth century before Christ, but it commanded no religious veneration amongst the Singhalese, and, like those in the stud of the king of Siam, it was treated chiefly as an emblem of royalty. The sovereign of Ceylon was addressed as the lord of Elephants; and the Hindu sovereigns of Orissa, in the middle ages, bore the style of *Gajapati*, powerful in elephants. Even when not strictly objects of worship there is no doubt that in the early ages white elephants were in some parts of the East the recipients of devout adoration. As if to indicate that the sanctity resided in their colour or absence of colour, it may be mentioned by way of analogy that Herodotus attests the sacred white horses which accompanied the army of Cyrus to the siege of Babylon, and records also that amongst the Egyptians purely white oxen were sacred to Epaphus. But one single dark hair was sufficient to exclude them as unclean.

Horace, in the second of his "Epistles," mentions a white elephant as having been exhibited at Rome:—

"Sive elephas albus vulgi converteret ora."

And, *longo intervallo*, a white elephant was exhibited in Holland in 1633, which had been imported from one of the numerous Dutch possessions in the East.

When Jaya Chandra of Benares and Kanouj was defeated and slain by Shahab-ud-Din, Mahomed Ghorī, in A.D. 1194, on the banks of the Jumna, between Chandwar and Etawa, a white elephant was captured, which is related to have refused to make obeisance to the sultan, and to have almost killed its rider when he endeavoured to force the animal to comply. In the time of Mahomed's grandfather, when Abrahah, the Christian king of

Himyar, advanced against Kenanah in Hijaz, to revenge the pollution of the Christian church at Sennaa, he was seated on an elephant named Mahmud, distinguished by its bulk and skin of pure white. In the sixteenth century a protracted war was carried on between Siam, Pegu, and Aracan, in the course of which five kings were killed, for the possession of a particular white elephant. In order to acquire one of these animals the author of "*Les Mémoires de l'Éléphant*" says that "whole nations have been sacrificed. This possession adds a new pride to the title of an Eastern prince. In Siam he is lodged in a magnificent pavilion with gilded cornices, and fed from vessels of gold. He takes his promenades under a canopy, and it is believed that the soul of a great prince has taken up its abode in his body."

There are numerous accounts current of the more than royal treatment of the white elephant in the kingdoms of Further India. Amongst other narratives by eye-witnesses is that of Captain Hiram Cox, in whose "*Journal of a Residence in the Burmhan Empire, and more particularly at the Court of Amara-poorah*," the following passage occurs, under date August 4th, 1797, at which time Captain Cox was a resident of the Honourable East India Company: "In the morning a procession passed by from the fort, of water-carriers, who were going down to the river for water to purify the white elephant. These were preceded by the palace band of music, dancers, male and female, and tumblers; and the rear closed by *woondocks* and a great number of the inferior officers of the palace. About eleven o'clock they returned in the same order." The same author, in a later work. "*Two Years in Ava: From May, 1824, to May, 1826*," observes that white elephants "are considered quite sacred, and are treated with all the respect due to the Divinity. They have attendants appointed to wait on them, have a superb house allotted for their residence, and are so highly valued that the one which was at Ava when we arrived at Prome was immediately moved to Monchaboo."

But the most graphic and detailed account of all—not intending by such an assertion to challenge the vividness and veracity of the descriptions of the recently-deceased white elephant at Mandalay, almost simultaneously with the overthrow and captivity of its royal owner—is that presented in Dr. Tandy's translation, from the manuscript of the Rev. Father Sangermano, of "*A Description of the Burmese Empire, compiled chiefly from Native Documents*."

Nothing, according to Father Sangermano, was wanting to the pride of Badonsachen, the worst of all the Burmese emperors—themselves the champion despots of all the world in all the ages—who was once addressed by the British Governor-General of India as, *inter alia*, "rich in the possession of elephants and horses, and in particular as the lord of many white elephants"—

nothing was wanting to the pride of this monarch, who governed Burmah during a long reign in the beginning of the present century, but the possession of a white elephant. In this desire he was gratified in the year 1805 by the capture of a female of that description in the forests of Pegu. It was at once bound with cords covered with scarlet; and as the place where it was taken was infested with mosquitoes, a beautiful network of silk was made to protect it from them. To preserve it from all harm, mandarins, who had been deputed to attend it, and guards watched by it both by day and night. No sooner was the news spread abroad than immense multitudes of every age and condition resorted to it, even from the most remote provinces. They knelt down before it, with their hands joined over their heads, and adored it as they would a god; and this not once or twice, but again and again. They offered to it rice, fruit, and flowers, together with butter, sugar, and even money, and esteemed themselves most happy in having seen this sacred animal.

At length the king gave orders for its transportation to Amarapoora. A superb pavilion was prepared on two boats of teak-wood fastened together, which were towed up the river by three large and beautifully gilded vessels full of rowers, and was surrounded by innumerable other boats, some filled with every kind of provision, others carrying mandarins, bands of music, or troops of dancing girls. The whole was guarded by a band of five hundred soldiers. The king and the royal family frequently sent messengers to bring tidings of its health and to make it rich presents in their name. Three days before its arrival Badonsachen himself, with all his court, went out to meet it. The king was the first to pay it his respects and to adore it, presenting at the same time a large vase of gold; and after him all the princes of the blood and all the mandarins paid their homage and offered their gifts.

On its arrival in the city a feast of three days was proclaimed, with music, dancing, and fireworks. A most magnificent house was assigned for its residence, adorned after the manner of the royal palace. A guard of one hundred soldiers was given to it, and four or five hundred servants, whose duty it was always to wait upon it, to bring it food, and to wash it every day with odorous sandal water. Several cities and villages were assigned for its maintenance. All the vessels and utensils employed in its service were of pure gold, and it had besides two large gilt umbrellas of the kind peculiar to the king and his sons. It was lulled to sleep by the sound of musical instruments and the songs of dancing girls. When it went abroad it was royally attended, and the streets through which it was to pass were all cleansed and sprinkled with water. The most costly presents continued to be daily brought to it by all the mandarins of the kingdom, and one is said to have offered a vase of gold weighing four

hundred and eighty ounces. "All these golden utensils and ornaments," says Father Sangermano, "found their way at last into the royal treasury."

The emperor was exultant, for he confidently believed that the possession of the elephant would confer upon him at least one hundred and twenty years more of life. But the elephant disclaimed all pretensions to divinity by a sudden death, caused by the immense quantity of fruit and sweetmeats administered to it by its adorers. It is impossible to describe the consternation of Badonsachen at this disaster, and from the summit of pride and presumption, he sank at once into the abyss of the most abject fear, expecting every moment to be dethroned by his enemies, and hoping at best for only a few short years of further existence.

This elephant was a female, and its funeral was conducted in the form practised on the demise of a principal queen. The body was accordingly placed upon a funeral pile of sassafras, sandal, and other aromatic woods, then covered over with similar materials, and the pyre was set on fire with the aid of four immense gilt bellows placed at its angles. After three days the principal mandarins came to gather the ashes and other remains, which they enshrined in a gilt and well-closed urn and buried in the royal cemetery. Over the tomb was subsequently raised a superb mausoleum of a pyramidal shape, built of brick but richly painted and gilt. Had the elephant been a male it would have been interred with the ceremonial used for a sovereign.

Happily the dismay of Badonsachen on the loss of his elephant was not of long duration, for a few months later some white elephants were discovered in the forests of Pegu. Instantly the most urgent orders were issued to give them chase, and one was at length captured, which arrived at Rangoon, October 1st, 1806. It was a male, and was in consequence received with even greater honour than its female predecessor.

But what is a white elephant?

The symbolism of the expression as a figure of speech was explained at the outset of this article, and we have reserved the inquiry as to what the white elephant is in the concrete until the last, so as not prematurely to rush the confiding reader to a disillusion. Oriental poets and historians have compared the fairness of the white elephant to the brilliant purity of the snow; but this, as well as the scarcely less pretentious statement already incorporated in our remarks, to the effect that the elephant Mahmud was distinguished by its bulk and skin of pure white, is a licence and an exaggeration. Some experts in natural history accept the white elephant as merely an albino, the colour of which is described as a pink white, to be aptly compared to the nose of a white horse, whilst others are inclined to regard the animal alternatively as a leper. Sir Emerson Tennent inci-

dentally defines the white elephant as one which exhibits those flesh-coloured blotches which occasionally mottle the skin of this huge pachyderm chiefly about the head and extremities. The front of the trunk, the tips of the ears, the forehead, and occasionally the legs are thus diversified with stains of a yellowish tint, inclining to pink. "These," says Sir Emerson, "are not natural, nor are they hereditary, for they are seldom exhibited by the younger individuals in a herd, but appear to be the result of some eruptive affection, the irritation of which has induced the animal in its uneasiness to rub itself against the rough bark of the trees and thus to abrade the outer cuticle. This is confirmed by the fact that the scar of the ankle wound, occasioned by the rope on the legs of those which have been captured by noosing, presents precisely the same tint when thoroughly healed." Even in an example of the utmost perfection of its quality Sir Emerson Tennent "apprehends that the tint of a white elephant is little else than a flesh-colour rendered somewhat more conspicuous by the blanching of the skin and the lightness of the colourless hairs with which it is sparsely covered."

Sir Emerson Tennent's remarks are the result of generalization from his observation of many elephants, chiefly in Ceylon. But it is pertinent to quote the Mandalay correspondent of the *Times* with reference to the white elephant of Burmah, which lately died out of loyal sympathy, it would seem, with his fellow-magnate and suzerain, King Theebaw, the "Master of the Saddan King Elephant," and "Lord of many white elephants." "I saw," writes the *Times* correspondent, "the sacred white elephant in a magnificent palace of his own. The only white about him is in two small dirty spots, which are almost imperceptible."

Professor Flower had anticipated this particular exposure of the Mandalay pretender by a more detailed and more technical description of the phenomena presented by Mr. Barnum's white elephant, which was for a short time on view in London about two years ago.

"The Burmese elephant," wrote Professor Flower, "now deposited in the Zoological Society's Gardens, Regent's Park, is apparently not quite full grown, being between seven and eight feet in height, and has a well-formed pair of tusks about eighteen inches in length. It has a remarkably long tail, the stiff bristly hairs at the end of which almost touch the ground. The ears are somewhat longer than in the ordinary Indian elephant, and are curiously jagged or festooned at the edges, whether as a natural formation or the result of early injuries it is difficult to say. It is chiefly remarkable, however, for a peculiarity of coloration which is quite unlike that of any elephant hitherto brought to this country. In this elephant the general surface of the integument is quite as dark as, if not darker than, that usually seen in its kind, being perhaps of rather a more bluish or slaty hue. There

are, however, certain definite patches, disposed with perfect bilateral symmetry, in which the pigment is entirely absent, and the skin is of a pale reddish brown or 'flesh colour.' These patches are of various sizes, sometimes minute and clustered together, producing only an indistinct mottling of the surface, sometimes in large clear spaces, but which are mostly, especially at their edges, dotted over with circular pigmented spots of the prevailing dark colour about half an inch or more in diameter, which give a remarkable and even beautiful effect. The largest and clearest light-coloured tract is in the face, extending from the level of the eyes to the base of the trunk. The animal is not a pale variety of the ordinary elephant, as some have supposed the so-called 'white elephant' to be, but characterized by a local deficiency of the epidermic pigment, in symmetrically-disposed patches, and chiefly affecting the head and anterior parts of the body. It does not result from any disease of the skin, as has been suggested, but is doubtless an individual congenital condition or defect."

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XV.

SHADOWS ON THE HEARTH.

JUST as you talk of Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror, so Lady Mabel's mother was invariably spoken of as "the dear Duchess." I soon understood why. Though past middle age she had a knack charmers of twenty might envy, of attaching all those who came in her way, though less given to attach herself with tenacity. She had smiled her way through life and found it worth living, for prosperity could not dazzle her, nor adversity cripple her spirit. She was pretty still, with her soft grey hair, delicate features—over-refined by illness—and transparent complexion. But she can never have had her daughter's poet's eyes. Nor yet her flighty ways and perversity; though with much the same volatile, Italian-greyhound-like disposition.

Married young, to a man of her own good but not exalted social station; happy in her domestic life, cut short by his early death; reconciled in time to her widowhood; cheered in middle life by the sincere affection of the old nobleman the partner of whose last years she became, she had sincerely mourned his loss; but who could sit mourning for ever, with this little sprite springing up by her side?—one who inherited her mother's gift of winning affection, if not that of deserving it. Since then failing health forced the Duchess, who, Duchess though she had become, had mixed little in the high world of fashion, to live in retirement in the country. Though fond of society, she made herself perfectly happy away from it, with Mabel for her companion, their mutual dependence knitting them closer together, and their life was without a cloud in the sky. It was not luck, or genius, or heroism that had tided her so well through all changes; it was simply an extremely elastic disposition and her power of throwing herself into what was around her. Lastly, she had married Mabel to John—a secret heart's wish of hers fulfilled—and now she was smiling her way down to the grave unrepiningly, persuaded that her eyes had seen her daughter's happiness. Whilst had she known, or but distantly suspected, what stared many a stranger

in the face, the sorrow of it would have sufficed to cancel all the gladness in her life-time.

It was enough to make you throw stones at that daughter, as wicked and false-hearted; a shameless girl, whom only the accident of birth and surroundings had preserved from ruin and disgrace. Then when she came gliding noiselessly as a spirit into her mother's room—something sweeter, softer, prettier, gentler than anything in nature—looking much more like some mystic saint than a daughter of pleasure, and with an appealing sadness in her eyes that pained you like the sight of a bird with a broken wing, you completely relented, and wanted to throw your stone at John Pemberton's stupid head, as somehow responsible for the mischief it had perhaps rested with him to avert. Whilst as for the friend who had impelled her to that open resolve to make wreck of her future, his unscrupulous conduct seemed too bad for any words you could find.

My new life at the Abbey was anything but idle. Every morning, after breakfasting in my own room, I went to the Duchess, to read her letters to her, and write answers at her dictation. Such congenial ladies have always a large correspondence. Private letter-writing is not a great noisy force, like the public press, but it tells, and the Duchess's influence, thus exercised, was active and widespread. Now began my initiation into the mysteries of private begging, making me blush for the human race. Talk of the self-respect that would rather starve than beg! but own that to find it you must go to the humbler classes. Why, the most voracious and inveterate beggars we had were the junior members of families of rank. Loans, donations, presentations, recommendations,—influence, influence—there was nothing she had or she hadn't that they didn't ask for, the cormorants! Next came the clergymen who had rushed into debt for school buildings or church decorations—the bigger the sums they owed and couldn't pay, the more magnificently they boasted of it. And so on, from the highest quarters, down to the young lady who forwards a pincushion and directs you to reply with half-a-crown. Had my mistress complied with half their demands, in a year she would have been a beggar herself. But she answered each applicant, and made a rule, when in doubt, to err on the liberal side. One day among the budget what should I hit on but a well-remembered handwriting. The Rev. Barnabas Dulley, curate of St. Hilary's, had sent in his request for a valuable living, just vacant, in the gift of the present Duke of Southwall. Of course he managed to slip in that his wife had been a Beccles. I gave an account of my life there which so diverted the Duchess that I was emboldened to put in a word for my old employer—for Miss Alice's sake, for whom I kept a tender regard—and it actually ended in his name being mentioned for a benefice, which he got. It wasn't the plum he had asked for; still it was a little loaf and

a little fish, which I liked to think he might never have had but for me.

In the afternoon I read aloud. That was my hour of pride. The late companion, it appeared, pronounced abominably, and broke down over the affecting passages of a novel. Lady Mabel read too fast and fitfully, and would always skip on to the heart of the story. Finding I had picked up a little French, the Duchess insisted on my taking lessons, that I might be able to read to her in that language. As for the daily papers, no actor in the whirl of public or private life ever took a brisker interest than she, who now never left her own room, in whatever was stirring, in politics, society, art and literature. Everything I must read to her, judiciously weeding out, as I went, those bits of specially disquieting Irish intelligence from Mr. Pemberton's county—now becoming more common—that would have interested her too much, or other news that would not have interested her at all. As for instance:

"Yesterday the 'Manhattan' sailed for America, with Miss Hope and the members of the Shirley Slater company on board. Mr. Gifford will superintend the approaching production of his play 'Zed,' in New York."

Or the shifting of the quarters of a certain regiment, to which, awhile ago, one Mr. James Romney had been appointed.

Meantime Lady Mabel, who never willingly left the sick-room, would sit by, with a bit of fancy-work in her hands, which, like a stage heroine's, never seemed to get a stitch nearer completion.

One day was so exactly like another day that you lost count of time, and weeks, months slid by so smoothly and uneventfully that you forgot it was moving at all. A friend here, a relative there, paid duty-visits to Dene Abbey; but between these and Lady Mabel there existed a coolness that reduced present intercourse to a bare and rather disagreeable formality. To local acquaintances she denied herself during her mother's illness. Some irrepressibles forced their way in, and I was sent down to return thanks for kind inquiries, which I perceived concerned Lady Mabel rather than the invalid. Scandal was rife, spreading a dozen contradictory stories, but the upshot of it was that there was a screw loose in the Pemberton establishment, and society must know the particulars.

Some were haughty and insolent, visiting Lady Mabel's rudeness in handing them over to the companion, on the companion, poor thing! Others were cordial and confidential, content to pocket their dignity, if thus they could worm out of me what I knew. I paid both back in their own coin; the first with short answers, the second with full information, but not a word of what they wanted to hear: Lady Mabel in constant attendance on her mother, whose state was still precarious, Mr. Pemberton unavoid-

ably detained in Ireland—length of absence uncertain—state of things in his neighbourhood far from satisfactory.

"Poor dear Lady Mabel! What a terribly anxious time for her!" sighed the kind inquirer—the Vicar's wife—an arrant busybody and gossip.

"A terrible time indeed," I responded conscientiously.

"Does she seem to feel it very keenly?"

"She has confidence in Mr. Pemberton's judgment and influence, and that their effect over his own tenantry will not be easily shaken."

"Does she hear from him regularly?"

"He writes regularly," I told her. So he did, to the Duchess.

They seemed downright disappointed that they could get no proof of anything wrong. Really, they reminded me of fowls worrying a sick chicken. Lady Mabel did wisely to hold aloof; for she could not have baffled their unsympathetic scrutiny for five minutes. Her being had experienced a shock that had left its mark. It told upon her appearance, and those good ladies would have arraigned, cross-examined, condemned, sentenced, and hanged her in the space of an afternoon tea. Only with her mother she seemed to escape from herself. She was a child again, a dutiful, affectionate child—taken up by daily care for the fading existence she clung to, as to something that was part of her own.

"Mamma is the only person who understands me," she said. "She never found fault with me, or wished me different to what I am."

One day Mr. Pemberton arrived unannounced. Called to London for two nights on pressing business, he paid a two hours' visit to Dene Abbey. He sat with the Duchess for some time, and afterwards requested to see me. Lady Mabel had remained with her mother, and I found him alone in the drawing-room. I thought him much changed; he looked older, and his countenance had lost something of its natural kindliness; something, too, of its natural indecision. His manner, entirely uncordial, but unexceptionably civil, implied that he had come round to regarding me as a harmless sort of person; and what he now desired of me was that in future, when forwarding the Duchess's letters, I should add my own impressions of her state, and the real medical opinion, if I could get it.

"Do you think her improving?" I asked.

"Not as I had expected," he said, "from her own very cheerful accounts."

"The doctors do not apprehend danger," I said. "They allow Lady Mabel, who is still very sanguine, to hope everything——"

He cut me short, without impatience, but decisively, saying, "You will undertake to see that in the event of any change, I am at once informed by letter or telegram."

I promised—then made bold to retort with the question, lately in my mind, whether in his own letters he had not been doing the same thing—writing as if all were well, in the midst of a very critical state of affairs.

“You hear much more about these things here than we do over there,” he assured me tranquilly. I persisted, referring to a statement that had appeared in the newspapers.

“For instance, is it true that your neighbour the magistrate, Mr. W—— goes about in fear of his life, and you go about with him?”

“W—— made himself unpopular by his judgment in a recent case,” he said. “But his action was just, and I support him. For the rest, Miss Adams, if we were to distress our minds about every risk or accident that might possibly befall, human life, which is everywhere uncertain, could not go on. It is necessary, of course, to be prepared for what may happen—that is another matter—and one,” he let fall to himself, as he turned away, “that has been fully attended to.”

The carriage was announced, and in a few minutes he was gone from the house. Our interview, which had not lasted ten, had served to bring back on me a sense of the deadly gloom overhanging Dene Abbey. The Duchess's unbroken good spirits and unsuspicion, Lady Mabel's absorption in the ups and downs of the hoped-for convalescence, and Mr. Pemberton's absence, keeping past scores in abeyance, had kept the truth out of sight. Now the veil had dropped from the family picture I felt I could have run from the place, and wished I had never set step there, to see what I was bidden to watch—the fond deluded mother passing away in a fool's paradise of peace; the child she adored fallen out of her shrine, at the mercy of slander dead certain to justify itself sooner or later; Mr. Pemberton hardened, embittered, but tested also beyond human endurance—who had deserved better.

In his high notions of the duties of his position, could Lady Mabel see nothing but the crowning proof of his indifference to her? His many responsibilities, the ungrateful work he undertook, reckoning at least upon peace at home, he cannot fling them up because his wife has disappointed him. If report spoke truly his success in spreading content with the present social order had rendered him obnoxious to those who knew no law in their work of overthrowing it. There was many another in his case, no doubt. Many another had sacrificed money, comfort, personal safety, and with just as little fuss. Still it was no common part he had taken up and was playing out alone in the face of irreparable domestic disaster. Could the end coming be that the bullet of some paid ruffian or deluded wretch should commit the frantic injustice of setting the wrong-doers free, to wed, or not to wed, as they chose, by cutting short a life more honest than theirs?

I started. Lady Mabel had come in so gently that I had not heard her. Seating herself near me on the sofa, she watched my expression. She was a *clairvoyante* at guessing your thoughts when you were thinking of herself. Half-wistfully she asked :

“Do you think me utterly wicked and worthless?”

Looking her full in the face, I replied, “I cannot tell. I do not know enough.”

“Well, I will tell you,” she said. “Not now—this evening, perhaps, when we are alone. Now you know so much about me I should like you to know all.”

“*Tout voir, c'est tout pardonner*,” was her thought, perhaps; “but has any human being, not divine, the right to say so?” was mine.

She kept her word. There was an hour after dinner which we were accustomed to spend together, away from the Duchess, by her own desire. The morning-room, just a degree less dreary than the drawing-room, was preferred for sitting in, and there, the same evening, she told me her story, which I tell here, as far as I can in her own words.

“THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY, BY HERSELF.”

“It is a law of my nature to be spoilt. That was the first idea I ever had. I can just remember how, in my father's last illness, I used to be brought in to him as a treat, and enjoyed the little proud feeling of the pleasure I could give away, like a queen, by the touch of my hand. My step-sisters spoilt me. They were good people, but not pretty. I was certainly pretty, and they thought I was good. My mother, knowing she spoilt me herself, would not interfere with the authority of the nurse, who spoilt me more. I was ten when a governess was engaged for me—well called Miss Griffin—tall, gaunt, black-haired and spectacled—a terror even to look at. Children ran away from the sight of the back of her head. She stayed with us seven years. Nobody ever spoilt me like Miss Griffin.

“The doctors had ordered my mother to live on the south coast, and she took Beachcliffe, a place near Torreville, where we often remained the whole year. Of course there was no society, but she had friends and relations to stay with her, and I the clergyman's six children to play with. They were just six little human play-things, that was all, and we were no more to each other than our dolls and hoops. But I was not lonely, for John Pemberton, my father's favourite grand-nephew and godson—whose home was unhappy—always came to spend his holidays with us. How I used to look forward to them! and how glad I usually was when they were over!”

I asked her why. She laughed.

"He was a boy—that is to say, a tyrant—but perhaps I was provoking. The doctors said I was delicate, and insisted on an open-air life for me. John and I ran wild on the green cliffs that encircled the house and grounds. I have never, even in Italy, seen a lovelier place than Beachcliffe. A little cove in the red sandstone cliffs that slope steeply down to the sea. In the dip below, sheltered by trees, stood the house—merely a large marine villa—the lawns in front overlooking the beach, just as here they overlook the meadow. No one ever came there. The shore, the bay, the cliff-sides beyond the grounds were as good as our own. John and I and the mountain sheep had the slopes to ourselves. We read, climbed trees, built houses in the under-wood, fished, rode, boated, blackberried to our heart's content, all without going out of sight of Beachcliffe. Miss Griffin sat on the sands under her parasol and read about the Seven Years' War. No need to look after me, with John for my protector.

"He came last when he was eighteen; a boy still to look at, and as boyish in his tastes as ever. Then we went abroad for more than three years—he was at college—and when we returned to Beachcliffe he had taken it into his head to go round the world and was then in Japan. Out of sight, out of mind. We never pretended we had thought very much about each other in the meantime.

"My mother was in no hurry to consider me grown up, for then I should marry, and she and I be separated. I too was quite content with looking forward to life, and enjoying, in imagination, all the delights I thought I could count upon when I should come out, and take Vanity Fair by surprise, and have everybody worth having at my feet. Meantime my greatest pleasure was sitting out on the rocks at low tide, reading Shelley. My mother worshipped Shelley, so Miss Griffin could not say much—she only shook her head.

"One afternoon I had left my reading, to search for some rare ferns that grew in the hollows of the cliff, and had succeeded in securing a large handful, when I remembered I had left my precious book on the rocks where I had been sitting. Rushing back, I saw the water already welling round the stones. As I wrung my hands in dismay, I perceived that I had attracted the attention of that rare phenomenon, a passer-by. It crossed my head that he might assist me.

"'Oh, what shall I do?' I exclaimed in despair.

"'Pray, what is the matter?' he asked, coming up.

"'Save it, oh, save it!' I cried. 'How could I be so careless? I left it out there—my darling!—and in another minute it will be caught by the tide.'

"'Where? what? Is it a child?' he asked, puzzled.

"'No, no—*my Shelley!*'

"'Oh—only a book.'

"'Only!' I echoed indignantly, then imploringly—'Oh, if you could but save it for me I should be so grateful!'

"He was laughing, much amused. A dozen strides over pools and shallows brought him to the spot, and I was overjoyed to see him coming back with my precious book in his hands—turning over the leaves to see if salt water had stained them, or perhaps if my name was inside. What he found was 'Mabel, from herself.'

"As usual I was conscientious after the event.

"'Oh, thank you, but I am afraid you have got wet,' I said.

"'At least your Shelley is dry,' he said with mock gravity as he restored it. It seemed to me quite natural that a man I had never seen before should start out of the earth to go into the fire for me—or the water—for my asking. I thanked him again; and he began talking about Shelley; and I stayed to answer him. Then Miss Griffin came hurrying out of the garden, horrified to see me *tête-à-tête* with a stranger. Our neighbour and clergyman, Mr. Smith, was with her, and Shelley's saviour, it turned out, was his guest and the companion of his walk, who had been left to disport himself on the sands whilst the clergyman called on my mother. She presently joined us out of doors. Mr. Smith introduced his friend, Mr. Francis Gifford, and contrived to let us know that he was a young man of literary tastes, who had brilliantly distinguished himself at college. The end was that they dined with us that evening. My mother has always been fond of clever people and likes to have them at her table—just a little as one is fond of dogs, you know.

"At dinner I was very grave and observant. I suppose he knew he was there to justify what Mr. Smith had said of him, and with one so appreciative as my mother it was easy. I listened but never spoke except when appealed to, which I was by Mr. Gifford once or twice.

"I could see he was fascinated. Perhaps ourselves, by ourselves, would not have been enough; but it was an interesting acquaintance and made amid charming surroundings. You can imagine nothing more softly, richly beautiful in lines and colouring than Beachcliffe. You would hardly believe me if I told you of the flowers that grew there out of doors, the pale blue and pink hydrangias, the wonderful lilies and tree-fuchsias. After dinner we sat out in the closed glass verandah before the drawing-room windows, where you never tired of the view. First the lawn, and a dark ilex grove alongside, then a bank dipping down to the beach, then the sea. I sat watching in a half dream whilst my mother talked æsthetics and what not with Mr. Gifford, and Miss Griffin listened spell-bound, and Mr. Smith put in his little common-place when he thought they were getting too transcendental, like a sneeze coming in the middle of soft music, to bring you down from the clouds.

"For a fortnight we met pretty often. His company was a great intellectual treat to my mother, and I was such a child that she never dreamt that it might be a treat to me—and a revelation besides—and that if he came for her it was with me that his attention was occupied. All the pleasure it gave me I took for granted, as one takes pleasant things at seventeen. Besides, I was not in love. People in love are melancholy and languid, and sit with far-off looks in their eyes, and read poetry, and lose interest in their occupations. I read, played, gardened, drove, entered into the most prosaic bits of my life with zest and spirit—slack and uncertain creature that I had been before. I was not in love. It was just a continuation of my life-dream, and I accounted it less important than even it was. I knew perfectly I could never marry Mr. Gifford. The social difference between us appeared to me much wider than probably to him, but that impassable difference made us feel the freer to enjoy each other's society—such a little part of life as may come, delightfully different to anything before it—an interlude, a fairy tale, a little lifetime. You think it is a foretaste of the world you are beginning. And nothing *quite* like it ever comes again.

"Although we never met except when my mother and Miss Griffin were by, we managed to say a good deal more to each other than they had any idea of. My mother could not understand that I was grown up. Miss Griffin was hoodwinked by her own partiality for Mr. Gifford, who was charming to her, and you could see she was in danger of falling in love with him herself! I knew that he admired me, that he thought a good deal of me when he was away, that if he was writing anything—and Mr. Smith let us know his ambition was all in that line—I was part of his inspiration, and that if he ever dreamt, like me—and surely everybody dreamt sometimes—I was a part of his dream.

"I fancy that our clergyman friend and his wife, who were responsible for the introduction, took alarm. They may have preached to him that as there could be nothing between us, if he felt himself getting dangerously interested he had better not stay on. For he cut short his visit rather abruptly; and one evening that he and they spent with us he wished us good-bye, saying we should not meet again—he was leaving to-morrow.

"But the next afternoon, whilst out on the cliffs with Miss Griffin, and straying away from where she sat, I met him returning by the hillside path from some leave-taking call he had walked out to pay. Of course we stopped to take leave of each other over again. Something had put me into childish high spirits for the moment.

"'How strange,' I said laughing, 'I knew when we said good-bye yesterday that it was not good-bye in reality, and that I should see you again.'

"He looked at me, wondering no doubt if I was really such a child as I seemed.

"'I cannot think what my mother will do when you are gone,' I continued, 'with nobody to talk politics with, or philosophy, or art, or literature.'

"'That is what one can best do without.'

"'Oh, do you think so?' I exclaimed.

"'Those things one can get from books.'

"'Books are not much good by themselves,' I said, as if it were a platitude, which it was, though to me it was a brilliant discovery.

"He asked why. I did not know. He should, who had taught me how the exchange of very simple thoughts and feelings with some one living person may teach you more than a hundred of the best books, and much more than is ever set down in print.

"He lingered to talk; it was our first *tête-à-tête* since our first meeting, and nothing in all his visit had been so pleasant as this parting, we both felt. The look in his eyes made me suddenly turn mine away across the sea. I felt my cheek flush as we stood there silent, I was vacantly watching the ships in the bay.

"Two coming out from under the hill were crossing each other's track, lit up by the afternoon sun. I can see them now, and the strange picture they made. A collier schooner outward bound, and a pleasure-yacht coming in. The schooner, dark-sailed, resolute-looking, grimy and grim, undermanned and overladen, the little yacht, trim and ornamental, like a sea-bird, with her snowy wings spread, skimming the surface. Pointing them out he said jestingly, 'Look there, Lady Mabel—there are you and I.'

"I laughed too, but I understood. Our destinies, starting-points, destinations were so far apart that we could never begin the voyage together. The wish for it first came to me then—a distant, passing, impossible wish—and, if it visited him, it was in the same way.

"I was more thoughtful for the next few days than I had ever been in my life. My mother may have perceived it, for she determined soon after to go to London for the winter and following season. Then came my introduction to the world I had looked on to as the event of my life. The stir and the change, the round of little excitements, gaieties, brilliant amusements that made up the next two years delighted me as much as I had expected, and I got much more admiration than I deserved. But my personal admirers in themselves were provokingly disappointing. I could not even be very vain of turning such heads as those who were turned by me. There was not one who could make me forget even that chance acquaintance, Francis Gifford.

"I was admired but not popular. Society judges shook their heads at my way of wearing my hair, and spoke against me when I played truant at long dinner-parties that tired me and made my head ache. More than one possible *parti* presented

himself, but it was the faint-hearted kind of courtship of timid natures and awoke no response in mine. If, as I began to think, I was never to experience a *grande passion* myself, I had not given up the idea of inspiring it in the man I should marry. I was considered very sceptical and cynical for a young person, whilst really I had very little knowledge of any kind.

"One morning, on coming in from my ride in the park, I found a stranger, as I thought, in the drawing-room with my mother. It was John—a stranger indeed, for no one, I think, ever changed more in growing up. We shook hands quite shyly; I could see how he was taken by surprise by the new Mabel, and I had a kind of presentiment that my destiny was before me.

"For the next three weeks we saw him every day. I made no scheme to captivate my old playfellow; I had only to be myself, and it was done. For who sees him now, it must be difficult to imagine how much in love he was then; and that he cared very moderately for our life of pleasure hunting, was all in his favour with me, who was beginning to tire of it. He seemed to me the most likeable reality I had met since I began to go out. I had not my mother's talent for sifting the gold out of everything, and was more impressed by the dark than by the bright side of whatever I saw.

"I let my imagination busy itself with John, and make of him an exception, almost a hero. He confided his ambitions to me, and I thought them noble. He had lately succeeded, through his father's death, to a neglected estate in Ireland; and was beginning a great work there he believed, and made me believe in—a crusade against poverty, ignorance, crime, and the errors of former generations, involving a great money sacrifice on his part. Success must follow in the end, and there was just an idea of risk entering in, to give it something of the fillip of adventure. And this man was distractedly in love with me. It was in my power—he made me believe so—to impart such happiness to his life as would lastingly inspire him for the task he had taken up.

"Oh, in those days I was perfection. My little freaks were playful and pretty, my delicacy of health indisputable, and every effort I made to surmount it heroic. He was never demonstrative, but I soon learnt to see and exercise my power over him in a way he thought magic; and when, in a manly and open-hearted way, he asked me if I thought I could love him enough to become his wife, I said I knew I could. My mother was overjoyed. She would never have controlled my choice, but he was the protector of all others she would have chosen for me, and her pleasure completed mine. It was like the happy end of a novel—all rejoicing, felicitations, flowers, festivity, blessings, presents and pretty speeches. Then, after our honeymoon, we started for Ireland, where for the present our home was to be.

"It was just two years later, when, being in London on account

of my health, I met Mr. Gifford for the first time since we parted in Devonshire. We naturally spoke of Beachcliffe, and he laughingly reminded me of the two ships we had seen passing, and compared to ourselves. I replied by congratulating him on his prosperous voyage. How should he suspect the mockery to me now of that reminiscence?

"That little yacht was built and equipped for calm seas and fine days only. My poor little pleasure craft had found neither, and fared accordingly.

"I had been completely mistaken in my estimate of my husband's feeling for me. Perhaps he had misunderstood it himself. Every day, after a little while, had brought me some fresh proof of this. As for his love, he was no more capable of finding value in it for long than in some Christmas-tree trinket you have fancied, tired of as soon as possessed, and kept nailed to the wall for some common-place purpose. I was his wife, and as he believed me serious *au fond*, I should of course fall in contentedly with the routine that offered itself, aid his plans, reflect his views, second him actively or passively as he wished.

"Although secretly disappointed to see how much of his mind was already appropriated away from myself, I still thought by entering into his schemes to attach him more closely. But how throw your heart into them long, if you were not blinded by enthusiasm? The people so false, so mean and cringing! The sacrifices we made were real, the benefits to any one trifling or imaginary. John said we were doing a good work, and I must be patient; but I grew convinced he was being taken in on all sides, and self-deceived too by his desire to rate his own influence as high as he could. I thought his exertions wasted, and his self-satisfaction obtuse. Whilst he was vexed that he could not make me believe I was helping to regenerate the poor each time I could get the mothers to come to a tea-meeting for the sake of the gossip.

"My life before me seemed nothing but one long disappointment. I lost my spirits, then I fell ill, and the doctors declared that so long as I remained in Ireland I should never get better. John, I could see, did not believe that. However, he took me away, but did not conceal that he regretted the sacrifice it cost him to reverse his plans on my account.

"Then our real disagreements began. What a change from once upon a time! The little unconventionalities that had amused and charmed him at first, scandalized him in his wife, as childish, reprehensible, not to say ill-bred. Provoked to retort, I forced from him some admission of how he had thought me one thing and found me another, thought that beneath the light surface lay a steady deep nature instead of a butterfly one, which was all he could see in me now.

"I was treated more and more like a wilful child. He seldom

opposed my caprices, but in his increasing indulgence I read increasing indifference. Jewels, finery, social excitements must be what I cared for, since away from them I drooped and pined. I needed fashion and admiration; he had thought I could relish philanthropy and self-sacrifice. How could a sober, sensible man have let himself be decoyed thus by a passing fancy? His duty now was to make the best of a life so hampered, to bear with my incurable deficiencies, and try and strengthen his interest in his people, his plans, his books, his ambitions, since the less important my part in his existence, the less my power to spoil it. In a word his marriage was a false step, for which he must submit to pay dearly. And this for me, who in accepting his love had fancied I was conferring a world's worth of felicity!

"He let me do as I liked, as though he did not care. I assured my mother I was happy, and seeing how eagerly I flew after the gayest amusements, she believed me. People who saw it was not high spirits said it was vanity. Nobody understood—nobody, but one.

"During the two seasons we spent in London I often met Francis Gifford in society. His position, which he had made for himself, was easy and pleasant. He was accepted and asked everywhere, on his own merits—social merits rather than literary. Could I help it if the old facility we had for understanding each other was there still? He perceived, though I told him nothing, that I was not happy in my married life, and insensibly, as a distant acquaintance, grew to fill the blank in my interests. Our approach to each other was the quicker and more fearless because we were hopelessly separated, and each time that we met in the whirl, and stopped to speak, was a stage that brought pleasure and left pain, making John's depreciation the more mortifying by contrast with rapid sympathy, his narrow reserves and punctilious creed with frank audacity of mind, his short-lived passion with the sentiment of which a more ardent nature is capable, and which it falls to some to inspire.

"It had fallen to me, I felt, and was glad, wrong though it might be. The feeling tided me on, making me forget how unhappy I had been before.

"But we must go home to Ireland. I was perfectly well now, but recoiled at the prospect. I raised wild objections that vexed John, and the way he met them showed how confirmed he was in his idea of me as a frivolous, foolish toy of a wife. Chance twice postponed our departure; I trusted for a fresh reprieve, but March came and our starting day was fixed. I dreaded the going back to the old life. To die of it, or to live it out, which would be worst, I wondered. I was more unhappy than I had ever dreamt it was possible to be. Francis Gifford was staying on and on at Moonstone Court, where we met constantly—he knew it, and he loved me devotedly, without hope of a return.

"On the first night of the theatricals we met for the last time. He was going far away to-morrow. We were out of the crowd, in the passage by the chapel, and it all came to me in a moment how I could let everything go for this and be the happier. I said :

" 'Take me away from all this misery, the slavery of a loveless life. I shall kill myself if I stay here.'

"He understood me too well to doubt I was in earnest. He was overcome by this proof of my feeling, only urged me to do nothing in madness. But the sacrifice I asked for he would have made, for me.

"Mine seemed to me nothing at that moment. I scarcely felt remorse, so far as John was concerned. I should simply be freeing him from the irksome consequences of his mistake in supposing he cared about me."

"And yourself?" I asked, as she paused and seemed to lose herself in the maze of conflicting recollections. "And your mother?"

"I had often thought of suicide the days before," she said. "I felt now as if I were going to die, but to wake again in a happier earth and know what joy was like, before my human life was over. John—my mother—belonged to the world I was leaving. Since my resolve, it seemed as if the Mabel they knew were dead already. All day long I had put away feeling and thinking, and I remember how I sat by and watched your acting, vacantly at first. Then something in it took hold of me, lifted me away. I forgot for a while where I was, and when the play ended the spell I had put on myself seemed broken. I could not bring back that deadness to every idea but one. It was the most horrible moment of all. I felt as if I were going mad. Wherever I looked escape was impossible—escape from myself. In despair I wrote that wild message I entrusted to you. I don't remember how I got back to my room; then just as I reached it the maid rushed up exclaiming that my mother was dying. The shock awakened but confused my senses. I fancied she must know all, and that it had killed her. Since then I have tried to forget everything for her, and for her I can do it. But when I think of how it would be with me if she, to whom I am everything, were no longer there for me to live for, I lose myself in the dark."

She closed her eyes for a moment, then looking up with the wayward confidence of the spoilt child that she was, she said :

"Now you have heard all about me, tell me what you think of me."

"You can be very eloquent in self-defence," I said, and paused there.

"And yet," she rejoined quickly, "my eloquence has not been of much avail. You think no better of me than before, if indeed you do not think worse." Then, as I remained silent, she added :

"Say that I seem to you a dreadful person—I have been frank, I am sure."

"Perfectly." Her light manner jarred on me at this moment, and brought back those harder thoughts I had been thinking, and which some charm in her presence and manner of telling her story had driven away.

"How should you understand?" she murmured distantly. "Of course you cannot."

"Nay, Lady Mabel," I returned, provoked to be frank once for all, "what is it that you yourself have been giving me to understand? You accuse Mr. Pemberton of want of constancy and devotion, because you have ceased to love him. You set yourself to cross his plans for his life, and are disappointed not to be idolized as his good angel. You expect a life-long sentiment of sympathy and devotion whilst withdrawing proof after proof of your own. You chose a destroying test. Would you dream of trifling with a possession you cared to preserve as, by your own showing, you have trifled with your husband's opinion of you?"

The colour mounted to her cheek in faint impatience.

"It is," she said, "that the half of my mind I prize most is beyond his knowledge. If he treated it seriously, it would be as pernicious; if lightly, as enthusiastic folly."

"Can you see nothing to prize and admire where the show of romantic feeling is wanting?" I exclaimed. "Your superiority showed itself strangely, when it came to action. Your enthusiasm for doing good disappeared at the first check it met. He persists, in the face of what soon daunted you, Lady Mabel—who can yet paint him to yourself as little-minded, common-place, and cold-hearted. Of this you may be sure, that when you threw away his esteem, you threw away with it something else more precious than anything you can ever put in its place. Not Francis Gifford, though you may think it, not any one, will ever love you as you wish to be loved."

She made no attempt to stop me, and I spoke on as I felt.

"You were neglected and unhappy; he admired and sympathized with you; and you threw yourself on his devotion, as if you were doing a fine thing. You prove your indifference to the desolation you leave behind you, your willingness to do the worst wrong you have it in your power to do any one, and yet imagine a man will think you worth his constancy, and that you can inspire a lasting, elevating love. Take care! Such passion is for those who have neither heart nor conscience——"

She checked me by an exclamation; a faint look of defiance crossed her face, but the expression of her eyes was dreamy and distant, and this seeming inattention made me careless what I said.

"You pretend that your husband depreciated your worth.

Nay. On the contrary. For till you forced the conviction upon him, he would never have admitted the possibility in you of such an idea as that which had entered your mind. You have spoilt his home, done your utmost to make his life valueless to himself, put it out of your power to stop the evils you have set going. And if"—I could not now have kept back my thought, though I spoke it with difficulty—"that life were cut short, and you know it is not in common security, you would have to be glad of it—*glad* for releasing you from a painful, hopeless position without dishonour. Lady Mabel, it is horrible! Something to stand before you always, to poison any pleasure you may steal, and bar the way to any happiness you fancy you can make sure of. Or, perhaps, no; but then, better talk no more of this, for if we talked for ever we should be no nearer an understanding."

She rose and flitted away to the window, averting her face in silent impatience.

I knew now I had spoken too freely; it was the moment for me to apologize or retract, but I could not then, and feeling if I spoke I might forget myself again, I rose and left the room on some excuse.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HAND OF DEATH.

LADY MABEL never alluded to our conversation, or the subject of it. She was just as friendly as before, but less communicative, choosing to ignore her confidences and the scene they had provoked. But if Mr. Pemberton's brief appearance among us left no other mark, I could never afterwards lose sight of the past and its impending consequence in the future, which, delayed, not averted, by regard for the peace of a dying woman, had passed beyond Lady Mabel's control.

Meanwhile she clung to the frail thread of her mother's life as though it were the one thing that bound her to actual existence. Her patience and devotion were untiring. You would say she was trying to make herself amends for her faults as a wife by her self-sacrifice as a daughter. Her physical strength was surprising, simply, and I understood now what a puzzle to a Mr. Pemberton a wife might be who is too fragile to lift a finger to please you one hour, and can bestir herself beyond those in robust health the next, if she has a mind.

The invalid's state continued fluctuating—too precarious to allow those about her to occupy or distract themselves, too placid to employ them very fully. Where were Lady Mabel's thoughts during those long hours of watching, waiting, resting? Mine, now and then, must glance on to the end, which, though it might

be indefinitely far off, might be very near. I saw her, bereft of her mother and of her lawful protector, estranged from her former circle, beginning the new future she had chosen, patronized by all the questionable or semi-questionable people whom, a while ago, she would never have admitted to her society, but who would not be sorry to see her lower her flag—succumbing very soon to the double dangers of a false position: the desertion and hostility of those who condemned her and pitied Mr. Pemberton, the sympathy of others who blamed him, or left him out, and pitied her.

She was changing fast, and lately had withdrawn more into herself, a sort of fixed absence of mind taking the place of her natural mobility. One evening we were together. For awhile she had been sunk in a reverie, to which her countenance offered no clue, when she suddenly broke the silence, and put out her hand, saying:

“Promise me, whatever happens, you will stay with me.”

“I will stay for as long as you want me.” I gave the rash promise, and forgot to wonder at it till afterwards. It was her way of asking. You could not say her nay.

But I could conceive of no sort of good future for her. Only her mother's vanishing life stood between her and her real, isolated position. This acknowledged, only a miracle could save her from falling under the influence of Francis Gifford, or some other fascinated, fascinating admirer—of admirers she was certain—when, letting go one scruple after another, she might sink to the level of other selfish, pretty little sinners; but she would no longer be the Lady Mabel I had known. She might die first, for distress of mind breeds disease in delicate ones, or she might lose her mind, which at moments seemed to me the most pressing danger. As she had said, she was a light-built craft, and life gives no warrant for a calm cruise. Your little pleasure-yacht that has got into rough waters is almost foredoomed to founder in the rude weather that is good sport to the strong ships in its track.

One day the Duchess seemed in unusually sanguine spirits and showed an apparent extraordinary revival of strength. The lessening of present anxiety extraordinarily elated Lady Mabel, who believed her wonderfully better. Why should she not get well—live on for months, years? She had falsified physicians' croakings again and again.

But I felt differently; there were other symptoms which alarmed me. Next morning I spoke privately with the doctor, who said he feared I might be right.

“I do not think she will live many days,” he said. “It would be well to write to her son-in-law.”

This, I told him, was done already. Writing yesterday, for the Duchess, I had added, on my own responsibility, a few lines

that I believed would bring him here to-morrow morning—the earliest time by which he could possibly arrive, supposing he started from home immediately on receipt of my letter.

“No need to say anything to Lady Mabel at present,” the doctor remarked. “The crisis might pass off, leaving matters much as before.”

By nightfall this seemed the likelier prospect. There was no change for the worse; my immediate fears were allayed, and transferred in some degree to Lady Mabel, who was in a morbidly excited state.

We were spending the last hour of the evening together downstairs, according to our daily custom. Lady Mabel would not have the candles lit in the morning-room, saying the light hurt her, and I had moved the small reading-lamp into a distant corner and hung a shade over it. It was not too dark for me to see her distinctly, reclining in a large easy-chair; her hair, disarranged by her listless attitude, had fallen loose, and its dark frame seemed the darker for the paleness of her face, which had lately lost something of its beauty and its brightness. Some animation stirred there now, but of a painful kind.

“Do you believe in presentiments?” she asked by-and-by.

“No,” I replied unsteadily, for surely there was a dead weight in the atmosphere that night, some influence that unsettled my nerves. She persisted:

“Do you mean you have never felt, as I feel to-night, just as if some fatal thing were impending, something irremediable, some stab of fate that mutilates your life, and defaces your future? What is it? Not my mother’s danger. I know she is better at last. She was saying to-day she thought now she should get well.”

“Your nervousness is the effect of your long anxiety on her account all the same,” I assured her.

She shook her head faintly, and pushed back her hair from her forehead, musing intently.

“What is troubling you then?” I asked her softly, by-and-by.

“Something you said one night, can you remember?—the day that John came. It has haunted my head, and seems this evening as if it would not leave me alone.”

I looked at her silently, not yet quite sure of her drift. She had never consented to attach much significance to the printed reports of the war of intimidation going on in Mr. Pemberton’s country, discarding them as sensational, and lending faith to her husband’s eminently unexciting accounts.

“You said, do you remember,” she went on, low, but emphatically, “that if now by chance any harm came to him out there, where his life is not in common security, I should have to be glad of it. *Glad—I!*” she ended, in a smothered voice, and pressed

her face against the arm of the sofa where I sat, sobbing nervously.

"Oh no, no; I did not mean it," I said repentingly; "you could not, dear."

"Those were your words," she said, raising her face, pale and tearless; "'something to stand before you always, to poison any pleasure you may steal, and bar the way to any happiness you fancy you can make sure of.' Oh, yes—yes! But how horrible to have come to that, even."

"Lady Mabel," I prayed, alarmed by her increasingly excited manner, "try and forget what I said. I spoke in the heat of the moment, unfairly."

"Nay, it was true, that was why it remained with me," she sighed wearily. "You might have said more, as, for instance, 'If that worst should happen, the guilt of that, too, is yours, to bear as you may.'"

"I think you are overdone and nervous," I interposed soothingly. "Mr. Pemberton can be in no real danger. He is on good terms with his tenants, everybody knows."

"Everybody does not know the people he has to deal with. Their fear of others is stronger than any feeling they have for John. Certainly, they would do nothing to injure him themselves, but neither would they venture to defend him if screening him meant, as it would mean, their own danger or loss. His success in preventing disaffection has been quoted, and now marks him out for threats aimed at driving him away, or somehow defeating his popularity—but which any madman is invited to pick up and carry out."

"Aye," I fell in, "if there were more like him there would be few grievances left to complain of, and some people's game would be lost." Seeing her brow contract painfully, I made haste to add, "But you are not to blame for the disturbed state of the country, from which alone any danger can arise."

"You forget," she said, "that I have deprived him of a motive for avoiding needless risk and personal exposure. John is absolutely without fear when once he has determined on a thing as right. If he had me to consider, he might not think it right to involve me in the consequences, and would feel bound to be over-cautious sooner than foolhardy."

"There was nothing in his last letter to disquiet you?" I asked. So far as I knew, his communications had been to the contrary effect.

"No," she said; "but have you seen this?"

In a country newspaper that lay on the table she pointed out a certain paragraph. It merely stated that in consequence of private information received by the authorities they had once more strongly urged Mr. Pemberton to adopt certain measures of safety, declining responsibility in the event of his refusal, but

that for reasons not stated he had again declined. I urged that the papers exaggerated things—that if he refused these precautions it was because he knew they were needless. But the source of these haunting fears was not one to reason away.

"It has all come to me in the last few days," she said, "but as people see things clearly, when they are dying, and there is nothing to be done.

"It was false of me to think he never cared for me. If he had not, and cared very much, he must have hated me soon. I did everything to bring that about, and then turned against him when it began to alienate him. I am the worst wife that ever drew breath; for I saw what I was doing, and could do it unrepentingly. I wilfully misunderstood John, and misled him, using my best to appear to him the worthless creature I ended by becoming. I made my own position unbearable, and then prayed Francis Gifford to deliver me from it. As if he could deliver me from the cause—my wretched self! I deserve the worst that can happen to me. To die; but that would not be the worst. I deserve to live on—with John dead—I knowing that I killed him, having first killed his hopes of happiness with me."

"Dear Lady Mabel, don't let your imagination frighten you so wildly," I entreated, but I felt her increasing excitement taking hold of me to-night, like mesmerism, against my will. Her strangely expressive manner penetrated me, drawing me to feel as she felt, and see as she saw. Madness and inspiration are twins, hard to tell apart. Which was it that possessed her now? Her eyes looked as if they saw spirits; her lips, parted, seemed about to speak some message from the undiscovered country. If she was distraught, her frenzy had paralyzed my common sense, and I could not put the words together that should bring her back to the world of reason. Presently she began, more gently:

"Sometimes I seem to be there where he is, and know all that he is thinking. Last night I dreamt that he died, hating me, as he must. For I *have* been the curse of his life. Then I woke, with a want—oh, such a want—to see him, just to tell him, not that he thinks lower of me than I deserve, but that I am sorry for him that he loved me, and that I am not worth his caring about, and that I should like to die, that he may forget me, and be happy with some one else, in quite another way."

She paused, then added in a trembling, terrified voice:

"If I should never be able to say it—if—that wish should have been sent to mock me, when some fatality is coming between me and its fulfilment. They say fate is blind and cruel. I never knew till now what they meant."

I put my hand on hers; it was dry and feverish; her manner made me more and more uncomfortable; yet I was now quite powerless to shake off its sympathetic influence, and laugh at her terrors. The dim light in the room, the dead stillness in the

house, gave to such slight sounds as stirred—the cracking of some old piece of furniture, the creak of the cedar boughs on the lawn—a lugubrious, unearthly effect. I was struggling not to share her superstitious alarms.

“What was that?” she whispered suddenly.

“Your fancy,” I thought silently, for I had heard nothing, though as quick-eared as she. Now, however, I caught the sound as of wheels grating down the drive. No visitor was expected. To-morrow was the very earliest time at which Mr. Pemberton could appear, in reply to my summons. Lady Mabel had started up, with a flash of something more than fear that her foreboding was about to be verified. The same plain dread faced me—of ill news that had crossed mine on the road—accident, mishap—news that he could not—perhaps never could—answer the summons. I stood motionless, speechless, listening as the wheels drew nearer—stopped at the front door. The bell rang faintly—servants’ steps—then a little commotion in the front hall, and voices ominously muffled and subdued.

“Let me go and see what it is,” said I, ashamed of this paralysis.

“No,” she cried, clinging to me with the rigid grasp of a drowning girl, “do not leave me alone.”

It was an ugly five minutes. My imagination seemed governed by Lady Mabel’s and forced to conjure up and dwell on the same ghastly possibilities. I was seriously frightened on her own account as well, persuaded that her brain was giving way, though it had so strangely got the mastery of mine. The voices, now in the outer hall, sounded hushed and mysterious, the steps uncertain, as they came nearer down the passage.

Quite suddenly her grasp loosed, her features relaxed, her eyes, which had grown dull, awoke. As the door handle turned she clasped her hands behind her head with a stifled cry, and was gone like a ghost through the door that opened into an adjoining room.

I was no less surprised and relieved to see Mr. Pemberton on the threshold, alive and well. She had recognized his step, but had disappeared almost before he could have seen her.

He closed the door, and came in. With poorly-acted composure I received him, and inquired what miracle had enabled him to reach Dene Abbey to-night.

He explained how he happened to be at the post town, twelve miles from his abode, on the arrival of the mail and my letter, which having thus come to hand eight hours earlier than I could have foreseen, had enabled him to save twelve on the road.

As he spoke, he glanced perplexedly at the door through which his wife had vanished, evidently wondering what had upset us. “What is the matter?” he asked. “I understand the Duchess is not worse.” I gave my report, repeating all the doctors had said, adding:

"Lady Mabel has not yet been told of her mother's danger, and is comparatively easy about her. But we have been very anxious about yourself, Mr. Pemberton," and I pointed out the newspaper paragraph.

"Surely you might have kept that from the Duchess," he exclaimed in displeasure and surprise.

"Oh, she knows nothing," I said. "I am speaking of Lady Mabel." I stopped, his face had ceased to express anything but surprise at some implied presumption.

But I was still under the influence of the scene gone by. It might be an unwarrantable liberty I was going to take, but at least I would not commit the blunder of apologizing for it beforehand.

"Mr. Pemberton," I said, "I am as anxious about your wife as for her mother. The Duchess's life is in danger, but so is Lady Mabel's reason. The strain on her mind is more than it can bear. Only you can avert more frightful misfortune."

"I!" he repeated with a freezing incredulity and contempt, which at another time would have silenced me.

"Yourself. Say you forgive her. Say——"

"That would be untrue," he said, surprised into giving a glimpse of the depths of his nature underneath his distant constraint, "and she would know it. A common mockery, but one I cannot sanction. To seem to forgive falseness would be to admit I esteemed the bond as lightly as she has done herself."

"False is a hard word," I said, "and not the right word for Lady Mabel." He continued, unheeding the interruption:

"It is as much as to agree that nothing is sacred; faith kept, or if broken, pass over it; for the world's sake let everything be as before."

"She has not broken faith with you," I said. "She may have made up her mind to leave you, as she might make up her mind to take her own life; but how can you, who should know her best, not see that the real bent of her mind was certain to restrain her from carrying out her purpose? She was distractedly unhappy; but why? Because she had come to doubt your affection. And you—you permitted the doubt to live."

"Affection! My God!" he said inaudibly, as if confounded by the monstrous injustice of the charge.

"That she felt the doubt so intolerable," I pleaded on, "is the proof that she cared for you herself. And you left her in her error—her error of supposing you had come to regard your marriage as a disappointment, her sayings and doings as unworthy of more consideration than a child's, her feelings as only skin deep, and herself as a foolish little flirt—though you may have given her no reason to suppose so."

"None, to my knowledge," he declared.

"Say it was her fancy," I persisted. "Her sufferings from this fancy were very real. Want of sympathy and response, that

drove her to think of suicide, came near to driving her to flight——”

“That it did not,” he said, “was due to accident; the accident of her mother’s sudden attack.”

“Nay, to her own better nature,” I exclaimed, “which had overruled her madness before she knew of that illness at all.”

And I related the story of my meeting with her, and the ensuing incidents just as they occurred. He listened with silent endurance. Little, seemingly, had I gained by my protest, beyond the no small relief to my mind of having made it.

The servant came in to say that the Duchess desired to see her son-in-law. Mabel had apprized her of his arrival, and was there when he went in. He stayed only a few minutes. For all his control of his demeanour, and her persistent efforts at disguise, something to-night had transpired, something in their look and manner, to strike the most unsuspicious. I saw her mother’s eyes follow him to the door as he passed out, in absolute perplexity, as if she thought her senses were playing her false. Was the trouble they had united to spare her going to fall on her suddenly, heavily, now it was too late for her to stir in any one’s behalf? I feared she would interrogate Lady Mabel or me. But she made no comment, asked no questions. For she felt the powers of her mind dim, and must wait until she was stronger. But that night the dreaded crisis came, after which her strength sank alarmingly, though she suffered little or no pain, and at times seemed not to realize her danger, making Lady Mabel’s wild hopes spring up afresh.

Next morning she rallied again, and the day wore on without apparent change. But I did not like to go far off. I sat in the dressing-room with the door open between. In the afternoon she desired to be moved into the easy-chair near the window, and lay seemingly tranquil, Mabel there at her side looking so young and childlike—not more than sixteen—it was difficult to think of her as a wife. An hour may have passed so. Then the Duchess sent her other attendants away, saying I should call them back when they were wanted.

“Is John here?” she asked of her daughter presently.

“Yes; he will come whenever you wish.”

“Send for him now,” she said.

I went downstairs to summon him. These last hours there can have been little room in his mind except for the impending loss, which, owing to the peculiarly close relations between himself and Mabel’s mother, affected him nearly.

“Not there,” she said, as he placed his chair at the head of hers, “there—where I can see your face. So—one child on each side of me.” And she looked intently from one to the other. They responded with looks of tenderness for her. She had noticed that they never interchanged a glance.

"It seems to me but yesterday," she said presently with a sigh, "that we were at Beachcliffe. If I were there I should get well, I know. Do you remember it, John, or is it too far back?"

"I remember," he said.

"So well?" she smiled, half-amused. "I have been going back further than you would care to—to your first holidays there. It was my birthday—you and Mabel decorated the room and brought me wreaths. Yours was red geranium, hers was heliotrope. I was to wear the one I liked best. Of course I wore both."

She was smiling again, faintly, a little sadly, at her reminiscences.

"How often, when I was sitting in the sun in the garden, watching you two chasing butterflies on the cliffs, I amused myself thinking——" she broke off, remarking, "What a wild little fellow you were in those days, John; you who were to grow up so wise and so grave."

Mabel, bending forward, was resting her cheek listlessly on the arm of her mother's chair.

"Little Mabel," she said, stroking her child's head, "I spoilt you, I know. Some children cannot take care of themselves, and if it had not been for John, I think I should never have let you go out of my sight. But he was one of the few—with him I knew you were safe—as with me—whatever else changed—my life-trust to you, John."

Did she know what she was saying? Scarcely. Yet she was troubled at heart by some sad intuition, some feeling of which her head could make nothing, and which she sought to dispel.

"I have liked to think," she continued presently, "that when I should be taken away, I should be leaving you with one who could value you, as I did, above all things. It has come true. But yet——"

Weary with talking, she seemed losing the command of her thoughts—one thought, one idea coming and going, amid the clouds growing thicker.

"I do not think we have ever been quite so happy as we were in the old home. They say it is not changed. When I get better, let us go back, John, and see if the place is the same."

Tired out, she ceased, and lay with closed eyes—no one stirred or spoke—she seemed to be resting.

"I am not asleep," she said suddenly. "My children, you must come indoors. It is growing dark. Come and sit here and look at the sea; how rough it is getting. Tell me where you have been wandering to this afternoon."

She thought herself at Beachcliffe. Her talk became broken and incoherent, as her brain grew weaker and dim. Then came a break in the clouds, a moment of full consciousness—of something more, perhaps, than we mean by it.

"Join hands, children," she said in a whisper.

John stretched out his hand and lifted Mabel's white nerveless fingers to hold them for a moment in his grasp. I saw her frame quiver slightly, but her mother's eyes were turned from her, and bent on his countenance with a look of simple, awe-striking scrutiny and solemn appeal. He met it most steadfastly—and this seemed to content her, for her gaze reverted to her daughter's face, to rest there with the old look of perfect fondness and peace and trust.

She died, as she had lived, a happy woman—happy in the unbroken affection of those she loved, untouched by the evil, unconscious of half the sorrow of the world around her.

Mr. Pemberton signed to me to take Lady Mabel away. With a smothered cry she bent over her dead mother's face, murmuring wildly :

"Take me with you—I love only you. Only you could be faithful in loving me to the end."

CHAPTER XVII.

A D R I F T .

TEN days later Mr. John Pemberton and I were sitting *tête-à-tête* in the morning-room, where I had received him on the evening of his unexpected arrival. Strange days they had been.

For the first few, Lady Mabel had astonished and relieved everybody by her wonderful composure. Then quite suddenly she broke down, and for three days was declared on the verge of brain fever. Even now, such fears, though passing away, were not over. The breaking of the tie between her and her mother had inflicted a shock and a wound under which her system sank at first.

Mr. Pemberton, though the loss had touched him very nearly, could be well-nigh thankful to the death that had come in time to save her from fuller, painful enlightenment. Business of every description, serious and trivial, crowded upon his hands; everything was for him to decide, and his mind and time were more than fully occupied. However naturally averse he might be to hasty resolutions in any matter of importance, circumstances were forcing him to commit himself to some course of action. For already pressure was being put upon him to return to Ireland. It would seem as if in a few days Mabel might be convalescent and able to attend to necessary matters; but her state, which so far forbade discussion or even conversation, promised to compel the avoidance of painful, exciting topics for some time to come. And this morning Mr. Pemberton had had a letter from some near relatives on her father's side, to whom the differences between them were only too well known, proposing that

she should come to them for a while, for change and rest—a plan he inclined to approve. Sincere friends and well-wishers these, said he. Excellent, terrible people, said she, who thought her a disgrace to the family, and that it was their duty to show it, but who would always do the proper thing. They were doing it now.

Not even John Pemberton's restraint and reserve with his inferiors could prevent him from now and then speaking his thoughts aloud in those days to the only person always at hand to whom he could possibly speak them, namely, myself. So it came to pass that that evening he as good as confessed that in the event of his speedy departure for Ireland he was still in some hesitation as to the immediate arrangements he ought to make for his wife.

"Take her with you," I said.

He said nothing. Presently he rose and went and stood by the window, looking out intently, as if it were not dark, at the cedar tree on the lawn.

If he did not feel he had not been just to her, and that it lay in his power to repair that little wrong, what use was there, thought I, in my saying a word? and what hope could lie that way, either? Then I seemed to see her given over to the magnanimity, forbearance, and silent strictures of kindred—"a little less than kind"—and who had no motive but family pride for shielding her now. It emboldened me to add:

"If ever you tried to make yourself independent of her—as she thought—did you regard the effect on one of her nature? Some people can only be held by the affections, but they hold them fast—as her mother did Lady Mabel."

He had resumed his seat and seemed to deliberate. You would have sworn he was coldly debating a question of duty and wisdom and expediency only, and that no other considerations could practically exist for him. I understood how it had been possible for Lady Mabel to draw those conclusions about him I had called false—and the surmise came now that after all she had not been so far out in her reckoning. If so, no present reconciliation could avert a final breach. Instinctively I rose, abandoning my part, and was leaving the room, when he stopped me, begging me to remain and be seated again.

Once more, but this time at his desire, I repeated the particulars I knew of, and had told him the other night, down to the words of her letter. But they could throw no light upon what was no mystery—those few simple sentences, that carried to him to whom they were addressed the crowning proof of her inconsequence; to me, the instinctive refusal of her womanly nature to taint itself with crime.

"Never speak to her of this," he said at length. I assented. Once more we were silent. When he spoke again his manner was slightly less constrained.

"You said, take her to Ireland. But would she go? Does she wish it herself?"

"Ask her," said I.

"And even if she desires it, ought it to be permitted, in her depressed and nervous state? The life over there can have no attraction for her. The place is dull, and at present I do not see how it can be made otherwise."

"She will have you. What she wants is affection, not distraction, and she will never be herself again without it. But can you give it her? For if you cannot, it would be a cruel thing to let her suppose it possible——"

He listened, impassively, but I had had a passing enlightenment, which, in defiance of his bearing just now, prompted the last words of my entreaty, spoken just aloud.

"But if you can, and value the charge left you, do not take pains to hide it."

The nurse came in to say that my lady wanted me. I went, and found her very restless and weak. I feared a return of fever. My presence quieted her, and I sat by her bedside hoping she would sleep, but she kept looking towards the door as in vague nervous expectation. By-and-by I was glad to see Mr. Pemberton enter. His anxiety had brought him.

"How are you to-night?" he asked gently.

She did not answer. She searched his face with her eyes. Man or woman, not of impenetrable stuff, must have been touched by them.

"John," she said, "do you want me to die?"

"God forbid!" he murmured to himself; then to her, audibly and gravely, "Do you wish to die, Mabel?"

"Not if I thought I could live to show you—you were wrong about me. I should like to live a little while for that first, and then——"

"Hush!" he said, and stooping down he kissed her, and taking her hand held it between his own with a real tenderness. A faint smile of pleasure passed over her face—it was spiritualized, like her mother's.

She waited awhile, and then asked:

"Will you take me back with you to Ireland if I get well?"

"You must make haste and get well, Mabel," he told her, with more demonstrativeness than I have ever seen in him before or since; "for I will not go back there without you."

From that day her recovery was rapid, though for some weeks the doctors would not hear of her being allowed to travel. They were anxious, however, to get her away from Dene Abbey, where all was now being got into readiness for the Pembertons' departure on the earliest day that she should be pronounced fit.

Theirs meant mine, but in some other direction. True, Lady

Mabel, whose liking for me had been cemented by late events, professed herself concerned about my future, even suggesting that I should go with them. But I thanked her and declined, and there it ended. They did not want me, and had it been otherwise, I was no lady-companion, possessing neither the inclination nor the qualifications for the post. When she entreated to know what would become of me, I confessed to a plan of resuming my former profession. I had written to Miss Hope, now returned from America, to ask her help and advice; and her answer, which I was still waiting for, might decide me. Lady Mabel made me promise not to quit Dene Abbey, left empty and dismantled with a few servants in charge, until I had some definite prospect in view.

So one day, to the unspeakable discomfiture of the country gossips, and the serious prejudice of the society papers, cheated out of the promised romance in high life, came the humdrum fact to announce that the Pembertons had departed for Ireland, where their stay would most likely be of some duration. I saw them start, Lady Mabel still looking pale and ill, but convalescent, Mr. Pemberton kind and protective, and the relation between them sincere, though it might be as far yet from perfect understanding as from perfect estrangement.

Her farewell to me was affectionate: "Write to me often and tell me how you get on. I will be your friend always, and everywhere, as long I live."

Mr. Pemberton merely shook hands, and said:

"I hope you will let us hear of you from time to time."

When they were out of sight a sudden sense of forlornness, of aimless freedom, settled down upon me. Adrift again; and as I looked back, and then forward, I saw nothing for me but drifting; my lot—to be moored now and again to some landing-stage, but only to be shoved off by-and-by, and float and float as the currents set.

So little you know or can forecast what stands behind the door.

Next morning came Charlotte's answer, as follows:

"Glad, Liz dear, you've come back to the fold. I put you into the Abbey, but not for a permanency, and I was beginning to think you'd never come out. So you've got sick of soft living in great houses, and no wonder. A crust of bread and liberty for ever! But first, the crust of bread. There's very little stirring just now, and inclosed is the best I can do for you at this moment. But one thing leads to another, and a few guineas never come amiss to one's pocket; so don't turn up your nose at the engagement I send."

"A country company on tour," I jumped to the conclusion.

"Well, I should have preferred a London offer, but that, as she hints, may come next."

How crestfallen I felt as I read the inclosure. Merely *carte blanche* to Miss Hope to send down any young actress she should select, to support Annie Torrens in a couple of amateur performances to be given by the officers of the Grandchester garrison.

I pouted, then scolded myself. Might Miss Hope be right, and the very moderate splendours of Dene Abbey have turned my head? Better make the best of a poor affair. The plays, "The Ladies' Battle" and "A Rough Diamond," were not new to me. I would study them again. I looked out the trains, calculated the expenses, settled what luggage to take to Grandchester; the rest should go straight to London. I wouldn't be so extravagant as to throw away my best dresses on a trumpery amateur concern like this. Grandchester done with, I should hie straight to town, take a lodging, and try my luck with every manager in the kingdom, except one, to get a fresh start. The liberality of the Duchess and her inheritors enabled me to take my time to look about me, free from immediate anxieties. So I laid all my little plans, tried to think they were pretty, and never dreamt that cherub aloft, or imp of mischief below, could be so malicious as to checkmate them. I parted with real regret from Mrs. Brown, the housekeeper, and bade an eternal farewell to Dene Abbey.

(To be continued.)



LONDON SOCIETY.

HOLIDAY NUMBER.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP: A STORY OF THE ALHAMBRA.

By MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON, Author of "Juliet's Guardian," &c.

"BUENOS dias, señorita."

The speaker was a handsome young Spaniard, with clean-cut, olive-tinted features and luminous black eyes. The young lady he addressed turned her head quickly—a very pretty little head it was, covered with softly-curling golden hair—and fixing a pair of merry blue eyes on her interlocutor, replied in English:

"Good morning, Don Ramon. How is the painting getting on?"

"I have brought it to show you, señorita. It is finished."

So saying Ramon Alvarez turned a canvas he held in his hand round, and offered it for Miss O'Brian's inspection. She wrinkled her forehead, pursed up her rosy lips, and tried to look very knowing; he regarded her meantime with a glance in which admiration was quite untempered by criticism.

This little scene took place in the strip of terraced ground within the precincts of the Alhambra, which goes by the name of Charles V.'s garden. It made a pretty setting to the two young figures, this narrow shelf in the steep hill-side, backed by the time-stained walls of the fortress and filled to overflowing with flowers and trailing plants.

A wall about two feet high and four broad bounds the garden on the outer side, and sitting sideways on it, Miss O'Brian's slight figure stood out against the azure sky. Don Ramon knelt one knee on the wall beside her. The birds twittered as they tended their families in the cracks of the old wall above, faint sounds came up from the busy town far below, insects buzzed in the sunshine, roses and heliotrope scented the air.

A quick footstep broke the charm which was keeping the young people silent, and a sharp, high voice exclaimed:

"Here you are, at last. I've been looking for you everywhere."

Don Ramon looked as if the new-comer's search might have lasted a good while longer without causing him any uneasiness, but he said nothing, and Mr. Birley—for that was the name of the intruder—put one foot up on the wall, and falling into an

attitude remarkable for ease rather than elegance, prepared to make himself agreeable. He was a young Bostonian, who, because he belonged to the Athens of America, considered it necessary to ape the tone of his cultured fellow-citizens. He also prided himself on his accent, and "ambitioned" to be mistaken for an Englishman. Affectations apart, he was a good-natured fellow, with a great deal of shrewdness where money was concerned. As he stood beside Don Ramon his lanky figure, pale face, and scanty fair hair made a strong contrast to the supple form and rich colouring of the Spaniard.

Miss Patty O'Brian, her aunt Miss Wickham, Don Ramon, and Mr. Birley were all staying at the "Fonda de los Siete Suelos," that charmingly-situated hotel nestling in the "bosques" or groves of the Alhambra. They were all four making a stay of some duration, and had arrived at that sort of intimacy which grows up between people who are in the habit of closing up their chairs at dinner after an exodus of chance tourists, and saying to each other:

"So glad all those chattering people are gone. It's quite pleasant to be to ourselves again."

Seeing that his companions were rather inclined to be silent, Mr. Birley, who had an unfailing supply of small talk, began to entertain them.

"Fine view this," said he, waving his hand outwards. "Not equal, perhaps, to the bays of San Francisco or Naples, or the Golden Horn, all of which I have seen; but still remarkable."

"Well, you see, Mr. Birley, as Granada is not situated by the sea we can't look out over its bay, which makes all the difference," Patty remarked demurely. "Nevertheless, I am mean-spirited enough to be quite satisfied with it as it is; are not you, Don Ramon?"

"'Quien no ha visto Granada, no ha visto nada,'* is one of our sayings. Whether it is true or not I leave for unprejudiced people to decide," answered the Spaniard.

There was a minute's silence, during which they all turned and looked at the view in question. A gentle breeze rustled among the tops of the beeches in the bosques below them. It was spring, and the trees had not lost their first freshness; their tender green contrasted with the rude outlines of the Torres Bermejos, or Red Towers, and the Puerta de las Granadas, the ancient gateway leading from the bosques to the town. Beyond the gate clustered the domes and towers of Granada, beside its two rivers, the Genil and the Darro, and again beyond spread the plain or Vega, like a brilliant carpet, its tints varying from deep purple to transparent mauve, with here and there patches of crimson, orange, and pale green, stretching away to where on the horizon the Sierra Nevada shot its pure and dazzling peaks into the deep blue sky.

* "He who has not seen Granada has seen nothing."

"I will uphold the truth of your saying," said Patty at length. "Where would one find such wonderful variety of form and hue, more gorgeous colouring, or more majestic outlines than we are looking on now?"

Mr. Birley smiled superior:

"You have neither of you been so much around as I have, I guess. I've seen—— But stay, Don Ramon," he broke off, as the young painter showed signs of moving off. "You were showing Miss O'Brian some of your handiwork as I came up. Mayn't I have a look too?"

Don Ramon complied with this request without alacrity. He despised the young American's pretensions to criticize works of art, about which he knew nothing; and it annoyed him to have to listen while the other exposed his ignorance. The subject of the picture about to be inspected was that of a gipsy girl leaning against the marble basin of a fountain. Her attitude of *abandon* showed that she had just ended one of the wild gipsy dances for which the Andalusian *gitana* is celebrated. Her arms had fallen to her sides, the castanets still in her palms; her gaudy dress, and the flowers and gold pins in her hair, stood out against a sombre background.

Mr. Birley stepped back and frowned critically.

"Ha! Now that is really a nice little picture. But excuse me, Don Ramon, if I offer you a bit of advice."

Don Ramon turned hastily away from his self-appointed critic. Not in the least daunted, Mr. Birley went on:

"That girl is well painted—very. I consider that quite superior as a painting; but the subject, now, is very common—a dirty gipsy wench. We Americans like something higher; high art is what we go in for. A Spanish lady in a lace mantilla and a satin gown is more the sort of thing to please. We like refinement as well as fine painting."

"As this picture is not an order, I took the liberty of choosing my own subject," said Don Ramon stiffly. Mr. Birley's tone of patronage began to be more than his Spanish pride could stand.

"Why, certainly, sir; but I contend that if you wish to get taken up by Americans you must choose the sort of subjects I suggest."

"Possibly. But I have no such ambition."

"Then you are wrong, sir. The Americans bring the dollars, and are ready to pay up handsomely when they see an article worth their money, which is more than your Spanish grandees often do, I reckon."

Mr. Birley felt so innocent of all intention to offend in making this simple statement of facts that he was quite taken aback when Don Ramon, instead of replying, flung his *capa* round him, made a formal bow, and with a "*Hasta despues, señorita*," to Miss O'Brian, stalked out of the garden.

"Now you have offended him, Mr. Birley," said Patty with a pout. "You should not have interfered; it was *my* opinion he asked, not yours."

"Well, I'm sorry he's vexed; but I really don't see that I said anything offensive. I only gave him the benefit of my advice for his own good."

"You don't understand him. Spaniards are not always talking about dollars and putting a money value on everything, even works of art."

"And what value would you put on them if not a money one? That's the true test, I take it."

"Oh, I don't know," said Miss O'Brian pettishly. "An artistic one, I suppose. Don Ramon paints for love of his art."

"He sells his pictures, though, when he can get any one to buy them," said Mr. Birley, and, as there was no gainsaying this, Patty did not see her way to a fruitful continuance of the discussion, and declared her intention of going back to the hotel.

Though she had taken Don Ramon's part to Mr. Birley, she made up her mind to chaff him a little about his majestic exit when they met at *almuerzo*, as the mid-day meal is called in Spain. When twelve o'clock came, however, she was disappointed, and obliged to reserve her wit for another occasion, for Don Ramon did not come in, and at dinner his place was still vacant. Patty now began to feel cross, for she feared Don Ramon had forgotten, or did not intend to remember, a plan made the previous day for visiting the Alhambra by moonlight. Somehow, as the evening wore on, the project seemed to lose its charm in her eyes, and she would have been glad to stay at home; but Miss Wickham agreed with Mr. Birley that it would be absurd to put off their stroll on Don Ramon's account, who could go just as well another night by himself. Patty secretly thought her aunt encouraged Mr. Birley too much. He was getting an atrocious bore, but as she could find no good reason to urge against their decision she yielded, and they set off. Passing along in the gloom between the tall trunks of the trees in the bosques they arrived before the grand old Gate of Justice, the principal entrance to the fortress. The moonlight fell full on the mass of masonry, which is hardly damaged by the passage of centuries; above the horse-shoe arch the symbolical hand and key stand out clear and distinct as when the Kadi dispensed justice below them in the days of the Moorish dominion. They were very silent, the calm beauty of the night checked even Mr. Birley's volubility, and hardly a word was spoken as, after passing through the gate, they walked across the wide deserted Plaza de los Aljibes, and arriving at the entrance to the palace went in and found themselves in the celebrated Patio del Estanque, or Court of the Tank. Those who think pictures, books, or Crystal Palace imitations can give them any idea of the exquisite beauty of the Moorish palace of

the Alhambra are greatly mistaken. The sense of being transported to another age and another civilization which the freshness of the delicate tracery and colouring of the decorations produces can be effected by no copy or description.

As Patty stood on the marble margin of the limpid sheet of water in the first court and looked at the vistas of marble pillars meeting the wondrously-carved galleries above, all strangely clear and distinct in the bright southern moonlight, she felt that strange *serrement du cœur* which accompanies an emotion too profound to find vent in words. They went on through the Patio de los Leones, the stone lions looking grimmer than ever in the moonlight, and, turning to the left, presently found themselves in the inclosed garden called the Lindaraja. Here orange and lemon trees made the air heavy with the scent of their blossoms, and between the branches of the cedars and acacias the rays of the moon came in fitful gleams.

Suddenly Patty exclaimed :

"Why, there is Don Ramon's easel !"

There it was, sure enough, and going up to it, they observed with surprise that his paint-box lay open beside, and that all his painting utensils were scattered around as if he had only just left off painting.

"How strange," said Patty. "I thought when he did not come in to dinner that he had gone off on one of his sketching excursions ; but here are all his things just as he must have left them when he finished the picture of the gipsy and brought it to show me this morning. He has never been back to take them away."

"Did he say nothing of his intentions ?" asked Miss Wickham.

"He said he intended asking old Antonio, the guardian of the Torre de la Vela, to sit to him next ; but he has perhaps changed his mind."

"He has very likely fallen in with a friend, and gone off to dine with him in the town. That is what he has done," opined Mr. Birley.

Patty was putting Don Ramon's things together, and when she had done, she suggested that they had seen enough for one night, and might as well return home.

The next morning, in the course of her usual morning stroll, Patty went to the Lindaraja to see if by chance the young artist was painting there again ; but he was not there, and his easel was just as she had left it the night before—he had evidently not been to seek it. As she came out of the palace gate she met Mr. Birley, who turned and walked across the Plaza de los Aljibes with her. She felt rather out of humour and disinclined to talk, as people do who, after being disappointed in the hope of meeting the right person, fall in with the wrong one. However, Mr. Birley was not apt to suspect any one of finding his company superfluous, so he said cheerfully :

"You have not seen our touchy *hidalgo* to-day, have you?"

"Don Ramon?" said Patty coldly. "No. Have you?"

"Not I. And what is more, the waiters tell me he never came back to the hotel at all last night. They asked me if I knew anything of his movements."

They had crossed the *plaza*, and were nearing the Torre de la Vela, or watch tower, as Patty answered:

"I hope nothing has happened to him. I am going to ask Antonio if he has seen him."

"By all means," said Mr. Birley, leading the way up the steps to the door of the tower. "He was going to ask Antonio to sit to him, you say."

Patty was about to answer, when she started.

"Hark! what was that?" she said.

"Only the people shouting to each other in the town below."

"I thought I heard my name in Spanish—Doña Patricia."

"Somebody calling Pepita more likely, every girl in Granada is called Pepita or Angustia. Come and look over the breastwork and you will see."

They went round the corner of the tower and leaning on the parapet looked over it. The descent is here much steeper than from Charles V.'s garden, and the streets of the town beside the Darro lie immediately beneath. In the clear air the shouts of children at play, of muleteers crying their everlasting *arré*, *arré* to their beasts, and many other sounds rose distinctly to their ears.

"The voice I heard did not sound like these, it had a muffled sound, but that was perhaps because we were farther away."

"Antonio does not seem to be here," said Mr. Birley, looking at his watch, "and it is lunch time; we had better go back to the hotel. I daresay we shall find Don Ramon there."

Don Ramon was not there, however, and it is perhaps time to inform the reader what had happened to that young man since, wrapped in his cloak and his offended dignity, he quitted Miss O'Brian and Mr. Birley twenty-four hours before.

Crossing the Plaza de los Aljibes, still feeling hot and angry, he was suddenly struck with the absurdity of allowing himself to be put out by an animal like that, as he politely called Mr. Birley, and with a laugh at his folly he slackened speed and turned towards the Torre de la Vela to fulfil his intention of asking old Antonio to sit for his portrait. As he neared the tower, he began to look for a suitable spot to pose the old guardian in, supposing he consented to sit; a little to one side of the steps was a bit of wall that he thought would make a good background, and he was scrutinizing its lights and shades when his attention was arrested by a large green lizard which, sticking close to the wall, seemed to be watching him. It was such a remarkably fine specimen of its kind that Don Ramon went to try to get a nearer look at it; as he

approached the creature darted away, and looking after it he saw a doorway that seemed to lead into the basement of the tower. He had often heard of the underground passages leading from the Alhambra to the town, and the idea crossed his mind that perhaps this was the entrance to one. Having nothing pressing to do, he thought he would do a little exploring, and feeling his way cautiously by the wall, he plunged into the darkness in front of him.

He had not gone far when suddenly his feet seemed to glide from under him; he made a violent effort to recover his equilibrium, clutched at a smooth sloping surface which afforded no hold to his fingers, and then the stone floor seemed to rise and hit him a tremendous blow on the back, and, all mixed up with his *capa*, which stuck to him as he fell, he found himself lying on the ground in a state of bewilderment. He was soon on his legs, wondering what on earth had knocked him down, and feeling about warily for the wall of the passage. At first he could not find it, the corridor seemed to have suddenly widened, it was pitch dark, he could not even see a ray of light to guide him towards the opening by which he had entered. Under these circumstances he drew out his match-box and struck a light, but what was his surprise to find that, instead of being in the passage as he imagined, he was in a small round chamber without either door or window. His match went out just as he had made this surprising discovery; he lit another and assured himself that he was not mistaken. Lost in amazement he gazed up at the ceiling above him, and there he saw the explanation of the mystery. The roof was dome-shaped and sloped up all round to a hole at the top, exactly over his head, and he understood that it was through this hole he had just fallen. The position was a disagreeable one; he realized, as his second match burnt out, that he was caught in a trap out of which it was impossible to extricate himself without help, and could he be sure of obtaining that help before he should be starved to death?

These thoughts darted rapidly through his mind, and then after having examined the walls of his prison, and found that they were made of that Moorish cement which is harder than stone and perfectly smooth, he placed himself under the opening in the roof and hallooed with all his might. All in vain, nobody came. Perceiving that he was growing hoarse, he ceased his useless efforts and determined to husband his voice; perchance by listening intently he might catch some sound from the outside world which would show him when anybody was within earshot. So, folding his arms on his breast he stood in the middle of the dungeon, his head bent forward, all his faculties concentrated into the effort to hear. Time passed, minutes grew into hours and there he stood motionless as a statue; once or twice he heard distant sounds, and shouted again and again, but no one came. At last he looked at

his watch and saw it was night. Hope was over for that day, so wrapping himself in his *capa* he lay down on the hard stone floor, and notwithstanding cold, hunger, and anxiety, youth asserted itself and he slept. When he awoke, cold and stiff, his watch told him it was morning, and rising from his uneasy bed he resumed his post. Now and then a shudder ran through him from head to foot, otherwise he did not stir. Suddenly his heart gave a jump, he heard sounds of voices, a moment more and he distinguished that of Miss O'Brian. By one of those acoustic mysteries not uncommon in old Moorish buildings, the voices of people going up to the tower were clearly audible in the dungeon at one place on the flight of steps. It was on that spot that Patty had paused to answer Mr. Birley. Summoning all his strength the poor prisoner gave vent to the desperate shout, which though it reached the ears it was intended for, was neither understood nor heeded. When the dead silence which succeeded his outcries had endured long enough to convince Don Ramon that no one was coming to his aid, he flung himself on the ground and burying his face in his arms cursed his wretched fate. For some time he lay there apathetic, a reaction set in and he seemed to let go all hope of life. Presently, however, turning over and raising himself on one elbow, he felt something pressing against his side; he put his hand on it mechanically to move it aside, and an exclamation burst from his lips as he drew out his revolver.

No man goes unarmed in Spain, the lower classes carry the *navaja*, or large clasp knife, and Don Ramon's pistol, it is needless to say, was loaded. He sprang to his feet and fired. The result was a smoke which nearly choked him and a great downfall of rubbish and bits of stone; he paused, no one came—clearly most of the noise remained inside, for he was nearly deafened. He decided to wait as he had done before, till he heard voices outside and then try the effect of firing his remaining barrels.

When it became known at the hotel that a second night had passed without any news of Don Ramon and that the landlord intended sending down to inform the police, the guests began to take a lively interest in his disappearance. At *almuerzo* the conversation turned on nothing else, and as tourists in Andalusia always have their heads filled with gruesome stories by guides and chance companions, whose great joy it is to astonish strangers, doleful prognostics were not lacking. One gentleman told how a rich Spaniard had been seized by brigands on his way to his country seat near the Sierra, and after his friends had rescued him by payment of a heavy ransom, he was found to be stone blind and idiotic in consequence of the ill-treatment to which he had been subjected. To this and other tragic tales was added, in scandalized asides, the serio-comic one of the party of tourists who, regardless of warnings, penetrated unprotected into the gipsy quarter beyond the Darro, and were by those semi-savages

stripped stark naked and obliged to return to their hotel in that shameful condition. Patty O'Brian sat on thorns all through the discussion, and as soon as the meal was over slipped away; her anxiety was growing unbearable, and she felt she must do something to aid the search, though she did not know in the least how to begin. Leaving the hotel she turned her steps towards the Alhambra, there she had last seen Don Ramon, there she instinctively turned to try to pick up some clue to his whereabouts.

Outside the Torre de la Vela she saw old Antonio smoking his *papelito* and sunning himself; she went up to him. As she came near she called out:

"Have you any news, Antonio?"

"News!" said the old man, "I don't know what you call news, but I can tell you we shall have an earthquake ere long."

"What makes you think so, Antonio?" asked she. They had turned towards the tower, and were at the foot of the steps.

"I have heard strange noises underground the last two days, and that generally means there is going to be an earthquake. Last time I remember—— Hark, there it is, señorita!"

Patty heard distinctly a sort of muffled explosion, and at the same time she remembered the mysterious voice which had seemed to call her the day she stood there with Mr. Birley. A sudden idea struck her.

"What is there below the tower, Antonio?"

"Nothing to interest strangers—at least not now; there was a passage leading down into the town, but that has been long built up. One can only enter some vaults and passages at present."

"I should like so much to explore those vaults; do take me down, Antonio, please do." And she put on one of her sweetest smiles.

Antonio was old and lazy, but no Spaniard, were he a hundred, is proof against the blandishments of the opposite sex, so, after telling her that she would be much disappointed—there was nothing worth seeing—he went to fetch a lantern, and she awaited him in breathless suspense.

When they were entering the doorless doorway he said:

"Now, señorita, you must walk carefully. I go first, holding the light low, for there is a big hole in the middle of the passage into which you could easily fall."

They went on till Antonio said:

"Take care; here is the hole, señorita."

"Where does it lead to?" said Patty, stopping.

"God knows," he replied.

"You have never had the curiosity to go down?"

"I? no," said the old man. "But I know one who let himself down by a cord; there was nothing—a small empty room, with no way out but this. He brought up with him the skeleton of a cat,

which must once have tumbled in ; and judge if it is likely there is another way out when a cat could not find it. Look in, *señorita* ; you can see there is nothing."

He knelt beside the hole, holding his lantern down into it, peering into the darkness below. As he did so he started, and nearly dropped his light.

"Santa Maria! what is that?"

The light fell faintly on some dark object on the floor below. Quick as thought the old man whipped off his *faja*, the long red sash worn by all the lower orders in Spain, and slinging the lantern on it, lowered it into the hole.

They now perceived the figure of a man lying face downwards on the ground.

"It is Don Ramon," cried Patty. "Merciful heaven! he is dead; so near to us, and we have let him die all alone!"

Sobs choked her voice.

"No, no, *señorita*, maybe he has but fainted; it must have been he making those noises we heard. So he was alive a few minutes ago."

With reviving hope Patty sprang to her feet.

"We must run for help; come, quick, Antonio." And leading the way, she flew out into the air to get assistance.

How came it that Don Ramon lay there insensible now help had come at last? As the slow hours dragged wearily on a new and terrible temptation came to add to the horrors of his plight. One charge remained in his pistol; he had fired away all the others in vain; what if he used this one to put an end to his sufferings, to save himself from the slow agony of a death by starvation? The silence and darkness were having an effect on him which the pangs of hunger and thirst alone would not have produced. A sort of madness possessed him as the second day of his imprisonment drew to its dreary close, and his disordered senses filled the soundless gloom about him with terror. Fearful faces mouthed at him from out of the black darkness around, lights flashed before his eyes, strange noises filled his ears, now as of clashing bells, now as of voices chanting monotonous dirges, or, again, wrangling with a fearful volubility that seemed to crush and paralyze his reeling brain. How long must he endure this agony before nature would succumb, and death come to end his misery? He was young and strong; he had heard of men living a week, nay, a fortnight, without food, and dying raving mad at last. Then he threw the pistol from him, and falling on his knees, cried out for strength to endure to the end; and his courage returned and he was sane again. But the evil hour returned again and again, and each time he felt his will grow weaker and the power of the madness of starvation and darkness greater, and the loaded pistol lay at his feet a magnet ever stronger and stronger.

Patty and Antonio were not long in finding help. One of the gardeners came with his ladder, and several of the loiterers always hanging about the Alhambra offered their services. Patty sent one of them off for a doctor, and then returning to the tower, threw herself on her knees beside the loop-hole and peered in breathless, while one of the men descended. In a minute he was beside the prostrate figure; he stooped, and raising him in his arms, held the lantern to his face. A stream of blood trickled from Don Ramon's temple, a pistol fell from his hand, ringing on the stone floor. With a piteous cry Patty fell forward, and had not Antonio caught her, would have fallen headlong into the fatal dungeon.

When she came to herself she was lying on the platform outside the tower, and Antonio and a woman were sprinkling water on her face. As her senses came back she moaned out:

"Too late! We came too late to save him."

"Come, señorita," said Antonio, "cheer up. He is not dead, the young caballero. We have saved him—you and I."

Patty sprang to her feet, and followed Antonio into the tower. Here she found Don Ramon lying on a couch. A doctor was strapping up a large cut on his forehead and doling out teaspoonfuls of nourishment to him at the same time. He was soon sufficiently recovered to tell how, lying in the half-dazed state which came between his paroxysms of despair he heard the voices of Patty and Antonio as they mounted the steps, and in a last effort of hope fired his last charge. He aimed right upwards, reckless of consequences, and brought down a piece of the roofing of the passage on his head, which knocked him down insensible.

A very short time was needed for Don Ramon's vigorous constitution to recover from the effects of his imprisonment, and when he appeared again at the *table d'hôte* great rejoicings were made. The landlord, Don José, came in and made a speech, in which he proposed Don Ramon's health; and Don Ramon, in answering, made such a flattering little speech of thanks to Miss O'Brian that she was covered with confusion and blushes. Old Antonio was not forgotten, and the only person who did not appear quite satisfied was Mr. Birley. He was very glad, of course, that Don Ramon had reappeared, but he did think that everybody, and especially Miss O'Brian, made too much fuss over a young man who had got into trouble by doing a very rash thing, and one which, if he had taken advice beforehand, he would not have attempted. But then he never took sensible advice in good part, as Mr. Birley himself could testify.

A few years later a lady and gentleman accosted old Antonio as he sat in the sun before his tower, and to his surprise and pleasure he recognized Don Ramon Alvarez and the Señorita Inglesa Doña Patricia. He did not need to be told that they were bride and bridegroom, and were come in their newly-wedded bliss to visit

the scene of the rescue which Don Ramon persisted in attributing entirely to the quick wits of his wife, though Antonio had a different opinion as to the person to whom the credit was due.

M. L. C.

SEA - B I R D S .

SONG.

SHE stood in a garden by the sea,
And watched the white gulls flicker by,
There were tall, white lilies at her knee,
And a dull, red sunset in the sky.
And the gulls sail by on the wind,
Leaving the shore behind,
One by one they follow the sun
On the wings of the salt sea-wind.

She leaned on the terrace-wall and sighed,
"Love stays a little while at best,
Leaves like the surely-ebbing tide,
Flies, like the wild birds to the west."
And the gulls sail by on the wind,
Leaving the shore behind,
One by one they follow the sun
On the wings of the salt sea-wind.

Pale grows the sunset sky and grey,
Chill sweeps the wind across the lea ;
Gone is the glory of the day ;
Sad is the story of the sea.
And the gulls sail by on the wind,
Leaving the shore behind,
One by one they follow the sun
On the wings of the salt sea-wind.

R. ARMYTAGE.

ROUND ABOUT LONDON.

A RAMBLE FROM LOUGHTON THROUGH EPPING FOREST.

ROUND about, and lying, so to speak, at our very doors, we Londoners have in rich abundance places and objects of the deepest interest, amidst scenery of the most varied and picturesque description. Little known, and rarely visited, they invite the Rambler with parks and forests, rural roads and rivers, fields and lanes, hills and valleys, in the most charming variety. Short and inexpensive journeys by rail place us within easy reach of them, and the average walker may, in the course of a single afternoon, enjoy all the advantages of pure air and healthy exercise while visiting scenes of great historic interest and the homes and haunts of famous characters. In them the antiquarian will find delight, and the naturalist glean fresh knowledge.

A centre readily and conveniently reached from whatever part of London you may reside in is the Great Eastern Railway Station, in Liverpool Street, and from it I propose that we make our first journey. Our present destination is Loughton, in Essex, to which the fare, second-class return, is one shilling and fourpence; but if you desire to shorten what some may think too long a walk, take a return ticket for Chipping Ongar.

Mr. Lindley's prettily-illustrated, chatty, and useful little guide, "Walks in Epping Forest," describes Loughton faithfully enough as "a straggling elongated village, cropping up in patches over hill and down dale for nearly two miles along the road" from London and the railway station. It is not in itself a very interesting village, partaking, as it does, of the common suburban aspect, but it has an interesting history. Its present church, built in 1846, and enlarged in 1877, is dedicated to St. John the Evangelist, but the older and smaller church it displaced was dedicated to St. Nicholas, the patron saint of boys. The distance from London by road is about fourteen miles, but as we have chosen one of the quick trains our journey will be speedily accomplished; otherwise the stations being numerous our progress would be slow, and the journey rather a tedious one.

And now here we are at our starting point, entering the pleasant old woodland village, where the ancient Britons and their fierce old enemies, the ancient Gaulish colonizers, wandered and fought and left their warlike relics in the wilds beyond. Here Earl

Harold, last of the Saxons, hunted, and governed as lord of Loughton, and of many other forest towns and villages, halls and farms in its immediate vicinity, both before and after he became King of England. The annual stag-hunt of the London citizens, established by permission of Henry III. in 1226, was held in that portion of the forest which our first Norman king granted to "William, the Bishop," and "Godfrey, the Portreeve" (or sheriff) of London, and used of old to associate itself with this tiny village in the wood, although the meet afterwards migrated to Woodford Wells and thence to Snaresbrook.

But in those later times it was divested of dignity, and degraded into a mere gathering of East-end rabble, becoming that grotesque mockery of hunting which sportive Tom Hood has preserved for future ages to contemplate in his humorous and famous verses. Then from early morn visitors thronged to and overflowed the village taverns, arriving in

"All sorts of vehicles and vans,
Bad, middling, and the smart;
Here roll'd along the gay barouche,
And there a dirty cart.

"And lo! a cart that held a squad
Of costermonger line,
With one poor hack, like Pegasus,
That slav'd for all the nine."

But this was when a never-to-be-forgotten local celebrity, one Tom Rounding, had become landlord of the "Horse and Groom," and transferred the headquarters of the cockney hunting saturnalia to Woodford Wells, a neighbouring village nearer town, in which this famous tavern then stood, surrounded by its tea gardens, being the favourite summer and Sunday resort of London actors and journalists, with highly prosperous citizens and their buxom wives and dainty daughters, to say nothing of witty Tom Hood, and good old George Cruikshank, slangy old Pierce Egan, and regular gatherings of local and cockney sportsmen.

Then the surrounding wilderness of beech and hornbeam held foxes in abundance, and great herds of deer ran wild in the ferny thickets and over the bordering plains, with huge numbers of rabbits, and game of most other kinds, furred and feathered. Then was poaching common, and poachers numerous. And then, too, the impartial and just found it no easy task to define the boundary line which separated country gentlemen, clergymen, and farmers who openly enjoyed their sport and fearlessly ate their game, from lonely men who hunted in their own poor way by stealth "on a shiny night, at the season o' the year," and sold the produce in fear and trembling to those who dared to buy. In those days sport held sway unquestioned, and jealously were its privileges guarded, even by those whose legal right to enjoy it was no better,

let us say, than it now is, though "sport" still reigns in Epping wilds! Yet venison was a favourite supper-dish on many a cottage table here in Loughton, where the higher poachers were sometimes tolerant in a degree of the lower, and often closed their eyes when respect for law should have kept them wide-awakefully and watchfully open. With many a hearty laugh and sly joke when the night closed in and doors and shutters being duly closed and fastened, luxurious treasures of beast and bird were then extracted from nice dry little cellars a few feet deep and square under cottage hearthstones and blazing logs.

In older times with a mirthful riot of baying hounds and huntsmen's horns, and amidst a roar of shouting in which every voice in the village bore its part, Mr. Long Pole-Wellesley, of jovial Wanstead Park, his head turned by his lucky marriage with a great heiress, would ride through Loughton amidst a throng of distinguished friends and sporting neighbours, his rollicking serving men well mounted with brightly shining boots and livery of Lincoln green, his pack of famous stag-hounds surrounding him, scattering sovereigns as another might pence, and laughing heartily to witness the struggling and fighting for them that ensued. And so he played his wild part in pleasant Loughton until, like another Robin Hood, outlawed for debt, he fled his native land a comparatively penniless prodigal. Tommy Rounding was then his chief huntsman, and many a tale of Wellesley's reckless jollity and wild doings did he tell favoured visitors when showing that great silver cup which was his banished master's latest gift. Hood depicting Tom at a later date wrote:

"And lo! within the crowded door
Stood Rounding, jovial elf,
Here shall the muse frame no excuse,
But frame the man himself.

"A snow-white head, a merry eye,
A cheek of jolly blush;
A claret tint laid on by Health,
With master Reynard's brush.

"A hearty frame, a courteous bow
(The Prince he learned it from)
His age about threescore and ten,
And there you have Old Tom"

as Cruikshank sketched him in one of the least known of his famous sketches.

It was at Loughton that the notorious butcher-hero, Dick Turpin, showed what distorting imaginations have since misrepresented as—Heaven save the mark!—gallantry! by holding a shrieking old woman, whom he had previously blindfolded, over a fire until, scorched and burnt, she at last confessed where she had concealed her poor little store of savings. Through Loughton

King James the First rode to or from the frequent huntings, of which he was fond, when he was the guest of Sir Humphrey Handiforth, his Master of the Robes. So also on many a spring, summer, and autumn day did his successor, Good Queen Bees. Familiar in Loughton, too, were the Onslows, to which family belonged a once famous Speaker of the House of Commons, and George Herbert, author of "Divine Poets." And terrible in Loughton were "the Waltham Blacks," of whom more anon.

Passing out of the village, where a tavern called the "King's Head" faces us, we bear off to the left and ascend a narrow lane up York Hill. Here the suburban gives place to the rustic, and we feel at once that we are in the country. Wooden cottages and houses of ancient date crop up in the midst of flower-gardens, kitchen-gardens and orchards, hedge-rows and trees. If we ascend from this lane almost directly after we enter it by a bye-way leading up steeply to the ridge of the hill, in two or three minutes we shall have before us a forest view of the most picturesque description. A steep green irregular descent, with a sky-reflecting pond at the bottom, is at our feet; and beyond rise slopes and ridges of tree tops retiring far into the distance, with such rich diversities of sylvan forms and colours as only a painter can thoroughly appreciate. The breeze meets us there with a cool freshness and purity which smacks of sea air, and the sun-shadows traversing valleys and heights give a new element of variety, adding greatly to the beauty of the view. On our left we see the woods which surround the Searstone Manor and stretch away to the right from Chingford. In a hollow more immediately before us, but unseen, is the little plain called Fairmead, whereon, every Easter Monday, the stag—his antlered head bedecked with red and blue ribbons!—was let loose for the Epping Hunt. In the extreme distance peeping up, faintly and barely visible, over the farthest woods are more distant hills. To the right lies Waltham, the famous abbey town of Harold the Unfortunate, with whom as earl or king many of the oldest local names in this part of the country are still associated.

Not less beautiful than it is at noontide when changeful sun and shade rest on its feathery bosom, is this noble view when the mists of morning or evening veil its deep rich colours with their ash-grey films, thickening as sunset reigns, floating upward and away with ever increasing thinness as the sun climbs upward, most dense and opaque where marshy hollows and ponds are and most transparent where beeches clothe the highest ground.

A hop, step, and jump brings us back to our lane, which we again pursue, rising with Staples Hill, toiling up Pump Hill, passing Ash Green, and mounting Baldwin's Hill. The views on either hand change and enlarge as we go. On the left is the forest in all its wildness, rising into heights, or dipping into holes and hollows: to the right we look far away over the graceful

undulations of woody cultivated land. Where a roadside tavern called the "Forester's Arms" is reached on the right, the forest view is a particularly fine one. From here, on a clear day, not only is St. Paul's visible, but hills beyond the Thames and the Kentish flats rise on the view as far off, it is said, as Sevenoaks. Great ponds, which are some day to be converted into a lake, rest in the deep hollow below the tavern. Beneath us on the right is the wood once owned by the ancient monks of Waltham, still called by their name. There the trees are no longer stunted and dwarfed by ages of annual pollarding with bush-like ragged tops crowning their weirdly distorted and ivy and moss clothed canker-stained trunks, but rise or broaden out into their natural proportions, many of them being remarkably fine old fellows of giant growth and the stateliest proportions. A ramble in Monk Wood, the Great and the Little, is something to remember. The young beech trees sweeping upward in graceful curves with their light branches drooping downward in long sweeping curves as they do in the hollow where a brook separates the Great from the Little wood, contrast strongly with the great clustering grey and greenish trunk pillars and the irregularly out-flung branches of their mightier and more ancient brethren.

Leaving the "Foresters' Arms" we follow the lane until, ascending Golding's Hill, we reach on the left two large ponds also called Golding's, one with a pretty island of trees in its centre. There we meet again the old London road from which we diverged at the "King's Head," and taking it turn to the left. Here we find ourselves in the thickest and wildest part of the forest, at a part called Broadstrode, where sylvan walks of romantic beauty abound on either side of the hilly road. The breeze, if there is any, freshens here. The Great Monk Wood is on our left with its shady miles of ferns and russet-red, brown, and ochreish-yellow depths of dead rustling leaves. Brown Hill rises on our right. Presently we pass on our road the pretty and prettily-situated cottage of forester Luffman, heartiest, best, and most genial of kindly keepers, and see the rough broad green band of rudely cleared space, technically called a drive, which ascends beside it to the forest heights above, famous for fox-holes, nooks of primeval wildness, some fine old trees, and the tallness of luxurious ferns, in which a man of common height may stand completely hidden. Passing the Furze Grounds and tree-hidden Copley Plain on the right, we dip into Dulsmead Hollow and, beyond the old gravel pits, with, on the left, their irregularly broken ground overgrown with briar, bush, and tree, emerge from the Old into the New London Road, opposite a little tavern, well known to all Epping Forest ramblers as "The Wake Arms."

And now, if it please you, most patient and silent of companions, we will change our course. Abandoning bye-lanes and rustic roads, we will at once strike into the depths of the quiet

forest here, at a point on the left some little way beyond the tavern, leaving the New Road. Under the low intertwining branches by a narrow winding uneven foot track, where the sunshine flickers and dances in oblong discs, spots, patches and streaks, a cool, green twilight gloom succeeds the blaze of hot sunshine in the unsheltered road. We thread our way amid stunted trees, brakes, and thickets, to another keeper's cottage, closely hidden under green boughs, and called, I believe, Forest Lodge. This is the spot where we are likely to get a glimpse of the fallow-deer, which once more roam wild in Epping woods, anciently their native home, to which their earliest ancestors were introduced by the grand old Roman conquerors and colonizers, to whom we owe so large a debt of gratitude as the founders of our civilization.

And with the gradual extinction of these rare forest denizens in Epping is associated tales of terror and mystery eloquently expressive of the social strides England has made in the last ninety years. We wander in this lone, shadowy remnant of ancient woodland, where the little gray old twisted and distorted trunks, hollow and rotten at the core, stand so thick, each in its tangled mass of suckers and sprew, weirdly suggesting in shapes and groupings struggles and writhings of terror and desperation. And while here amongst them we may the more vividly recall certain wild and darksome deeds with which Epping Forest and its deer once were associated. Such scenery with such associations blend to enforce appeals to the imagination. Let us imagine :

Deer were fast disappearing all over England. Where vast herds once roamed, comparatively few were to be found, when the reader and myself, being about one hundred years younger in our imaginations than we are in reality, come riding along the road we have just traversed to one of the old roadside taverns we have just passed. The day is dying, the forest blackening, and the ascending road looks very cold and anciently grey as it slopes upward and downward in the gloom before us, in wave-like undulations, the mist lying cold and thick in its deeper hollows. The western fire burns with a dusky red, and the clouds above it take a dusky blood-red tinge. The air feels moist like coming rain, and storm clouds rising with the darkness and the moaning wind drift swiftly towards us.

Our ears are strained to catch every sound so keenly that we even hear the tiny mouse-like squeaks of the bats now darting and wheeling about our heads. The strange jarring voice of the night-jar whirs away as if the wheels of some machinery had escaped control. Frightened, small creatures dart from us on either side, and rush through the tall rustling grass and leafy branches while we, with pistols in our holsters, recall horrible tales of foot-pad bands and highwaymen. Down in the Rough-

way through the gravel pits my horse falls lame, and so I dismount, and we are heartily glad to reach the "Wake Arms," and there put up for the night.

But how is this? The host eyes us askance, is reluctant to admit us, makes excuses, says he has no spare bed, recommends us with strange earnestness to ride on to Epping, and seems altogether suspicious and uncomfortable. We are determined, however, to stop with him even if we sit up all night. The man's wife comes in. She is a very honest, good-looking woman. I like her. But she adds her protests to her husband's, and seems so frightened by our obstinacy that we begin to imagine evil. Are we in one of the many obscure dens of highway robbers and murderers known to exist in this the wildest and most solitary part of Essex?

I bribe the woman to tell us the truth, and press her if all is right to find a bed for us. She hesitates, is confused, says something about our being gentlemen and promising solemnly to say nothing of anything we may see or hear under her roof when we went away. We faithfully promise, and then all is well with us for a time. Our steeds are stabled, our glasses are filled.

We are enjoying our grog and smoking our pipes by the blazing and crackling logs, when four or five horsemen ride up. We hear their voices as they dismount, and then catch the sound of hoofs clattering over the uneven stones of the stable-yard behind.

We hear whispering outside the door—men's voices and a woman's. We catch the words, "sure they are to be trusted," and "gentlemen and persons of honour." The door opens and half-a-dozen powerful-looking men, with blackened faces and otherwise disguised, all armed with cutlasses and great heavy pistols, unceremoniously enter. One comes laughingly forward:

"Don't be alarmed, gentlemen. We shall not harm you. My business is simply to invite you to join us at a feast of venison. If you will give us your company we shall be proud of the honour."

This is no vulgar murderous ruffian of the type represented by the ex-butcher Turpin.

We respond with all due civility, and thankfully accept the curious invitation. The man jocularly adds:

"You are naturally curious to know who we are, and your curiosity shall be gratified. I am the Black Prince, and these gentlemen are the Waltham Blacks. Presently I shall have the privilege of introducing you to our sovereign ruler, Oronooko, King of the Blacks, a despotic sovereign whose agents exist wherever deer run free."

They sit down with us, their glasses are filled, their pipes lighted, the talk is free, and general jollity is the order of the evening.

Fresh arrivals. More horses and more men. Loud laughing and talking. The tramp of feet outside the door of our room passes up the stairs, and is heard overhead.

The landlord's face beams merrily in through the half-open door, which admits savoury odours. He says:

"Supper is ready, gentlemen."

We all go upstairs into a larger room, where a long table is laid for supper—a snowy cloth, a show of glass, a general air of festivity. A number of men with blackened faces have already taken their seats, and one occupies a chair of state at the head of the table. Stags' horns are above the chimney, a glorious fire of logs and roots glows and blazes beneath them on the wide hearth.

I remark to you that so well are all these men disguised that I believe we both might meet them undisguised an hour or two hence without recognizing them.

You think we ought to recognize them by their voices. Well, not to swear to. We are formally introduced to Oronooko, the king, who welcomes us with mock stateliness, and says:

"It is our royal will that you shall eat, drink, and be merry. We accept you as guests in the firm belief that you will not treacherously abuse our generous hospitality and confidence, nor forget that never a deer forest in England will be safe resorts for any who betray our wide-spread, long-armed order."

Then some new members are made, having fulfilled the ordinary preliminary condition of having been twice drunk in their company. They are sworn upon the antlers above the chimney-piece to be true comrades and faithful friends, and each promises to equip himself with a good mare or gelding, a brace of pistols and a gun "to lye on the saddle-bow." After which one by one they received a new name by which only they are now to be known amongst the Waltham Blacks.

The evening passes in feasting and merry-making. Eighteen great dishes of venison appear and disappear, cooked in various ways, roasted and boiled, with broth and hashed "collups, pasties, and 'umble pies"—that is to say pies made with those internal parts of deer which were anciently regarded as the perquisites of the keeper, or persons of humble rank. (Ah! Mrs. Luffman, content were I with 'umble pie so made if you were the maker.) Songs are sung and noisy hunting choruses go roaring out and far away into the lonesome blackness of the wood—"A-hunting we will go-o-o-o; a-hunting we will go." It is far into the morning when the jovial gathering breaks up. The voice of Oronooko is less clear than it should be, his step uncertain, as he shakes hands and tells us there will be knife, fork, and plate ready for us on any Thursday evening at the "Wake Arms," and a jolly welcome so long as he escapes the gallows.

And then we go to a cosy little bedroom, where we sleep

soundly, and in the morning after breakfast we are assured by our landlord that all the forest folk regard the Blacks with friendly eyes, because the crimes they commit are not crimes in the All-seeing eye, for, says he, "Deer are wild beasts and wild beasts, you know, sir, as everybody says, are no man's property!"

Is this picture all imaginary? By no means, only that portion which concerns ourselves. The Waltham Blacks were real beings, and the meeting above described was one of which an eye-witness gives a full account in a private letter to his friend, which letter—if *Frazer's Magazine* for August, 1857, is to be trusted—was then extant.

An old keeper of Wolmer Forest says the deer there were most abundant, herds roaming wild in every direction. But he adds their number was terribly and swiftly reduced "as soon as they began Blacking." Criminal records of the period tell us how a number of Waltham Blacks having been captured and committed to Winchester gaol, were removed by *habeas* in order that their trial might be conducted under more solemn circumstances in Newgate, after which their execution took place at Tyburn. Their confessions substantiate the romantic stories told of their regular, far-stretching organization, and show that as a secret society for the support of criminal purposes, it was really a power in the land seriously subversive of law and industry. One of these Blacks was a mere lad, whose seemingly artless account of himself shows that he obeyed and followed the Blacks under terror and duress. He was carried off by force in the county of Surrey by some thirty or forty men whom he met by chance. They made him swear to faithfully follow and obey, as true and loyal subject, the King of the Blacks. They carried him with them, compelling him to aid them in their evil deeds of robbing warrens, illegal fishing, breaking down the heads of fish-ponds, the pales about parks, burning woods and killing deer. They solemnly assured him that they had magic power, and by means of it, if he turned traitor, they could transform him into a beast to carry their burdens and feed upon grass and water. He saw them bind and blindfold two men who wanted to escape from them and bury them in the earth so that only their heads were above it. Then they all ran at them making hideous noises just as if they were so many savage dogs, and when they were sufficiently terrified dug them up, threatening more serious punishment if they again offended. He said they used to compel carters to carry their plunder, and by awful threats make them and others swear to keep their secrets. They destroyed all the deer in Waltham Chase, and when the Bishop of Winchester was urged to restock it, that worthy prelate emphatically refused to do so, sadly pointing out that the deer had already done such terrible mischief that a chase without deer was but a tiny thing in comparison with the wickedness and misery already occasioned by these

animals. The Black Act (31 Geo. II. c. 42), consequent upon these lawless doings, comprehended more felonies than any Act previously passed. From it we learn that the name of Waltham connected with them came from Waltham in Hants, not Waltham in Essex, and that anonymous threatening letters and numerous murders, with the frequent rescue of prisoners by force, were amongst the crimes for which they were usually condemned as guilty of "felony without benefit of clergy." The stories told of their wild doings are stirring and romantic enough for sensational fiction, and there appears to have been vaguely present in the minds of the organizers of this strange body of criminals ideas closely akin to those professed by many of the Socialistic leaders of the present day.

It was largely in consequence of the devastation wrought by the Waltham Blacks here in Epping Forest, which was one of their favourite haunts and most secure places of hiding, that in 1863 there were not to be found in its whole extent more than nine or ten of the wild deer which had roamed here in such vast herds, and were still to be found here as late as the year 1829.

So much for the now almost forgotten Blacks whose name was once a terror all over the country.

Here we emerge from the forest at a point whence on another occasion we may resume our walk to Chipping Ongar.

A. H. WALL.

CAITHNESS AS A SUMMER RESORT, WITH REMINISCENCES.

IN the far north of Scotland a bare and bleak county is surrounded on three sides by the restless sea and frowning cliffs, and familiarized by the well-known landmarks of John o' Groat's House and Duncansby Head. No rich rolling uplands here, nor valleys thickly clad with trees, but a treeless and nearly level expanse of uninviting mixed moor and arable land, of which the moor forms by far the larger portion, or in the words of an enraptured Yankee squatter, "a splendid clearin'."

From the northern extremities of the county a clear view extends southward for a distance of nearly thirty miles of all the intermediate land lying north of the range of hills that separate Caithness from Sutherland.

The county, generally speaking, is not less different from what it was forty years ago than can be said of most counties in Scotland within the same period of progress. Furthest away from the great centres of railway communication it was also the last to obtain that. Only of recent years has the venerable stage-coach of antiquity disappeared with its sounding horns from the scene for ever. The iron horse with its hoarse voice and winged feet has taken its place. Steam communication, however, by sea has existed for full forty years between Caithness, the Orkney Islands and the south. From a steamer once a week gradually came two to ply bi-weekly as now between Edinburgh, Wick, and round by the northernmost of the Shetland Isles. With these the Great Northern Railway, having its terminus at Wick, thus far competes, and the public derives the advantage in specially reduced tariff and fares on the steamers' sailing days.

Amid all the progressive changes which are bringing Caithness up to a level with the times, her people still remain much the same in their distinctive character and individuality. On her east coast are still to be found the tall, well-built, ruddy-complexioned English-speaking people, exhibiting a strong Scandinavian infusion, even to their names, and excelling, it must be confessed, in general appearance and attainments the average lowlander of the same station in life; while on her west we meet shorter stature, broad, square build, high cheek bones, and fair hair which proclaim the Gaelic-speaking Celt. Small though the area of Caithness, and continually intermixing as its inhabitants are, yet the anomaly is still to be found here of two parishes lying side

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by side, the one almost exclusively English-speaking, the other almost as entirely Gaelic, just as they have been for generations. This of course applies to the people in the country, not in the towns, as does this article generally. From the east side, where you hear nothing but English, travel westwards but a distance of ten or twelve miles, and in many of the houses and hamlets nestling among the heather you will barely be understood in English; and as with the language so with the proper names. On the east coast we find Rugg, Inkester, Coghill, Annal, Bonell, Inrig, &c., and other such names with a Scandinavian ring, which are rarely heard of farther south; and westwards we find the "Macs" begin, and Mackay meeting us everywhere. Towards the south of Caithness again, where it borders on Sutherland, and the county becomes wilder and more heathery, Gaelic predominates both east and west.

The Caithness English is a *patois* of its own, and Caithnessians meeting abroad rarely fail to recognize each other through the freemasonry of their dialect. Generally speaking, the same type of people as that of Caithness is to be met with over most of the north of Scotland, including, along with good physique and feature, the vivid white and red complexion which foreigners so admire in Inverness, and which reminds one so strongly of the Genevese and northern Italians.

With regard to habitations, the neat little stone cottages which now so thickly besprinkle the country, had little or no existence forty years ago. In their place were the mud and thatch hovels of time immemorial, with their cosy "but" and "ben," and their roofs overgrown with grass and aspiring wild flowers, from the midst of which struggled out the smoke through the "lum." The "ben" was the general family room, and while sitting here could be comfortably watched and heard through the connecting doorway the four-footed occupants of the "but" that comprised the cottar's farm-stock as they quietly munched their food. From thence emanated a strong farm-yard odour, which, together with the more pungent odour close at hand from the slumbering family of pigs that encircled the blazing peat fire, formed a combined result that was decidedly *strong*. Of this, however, the cottar's family appeared in blissful ignorance, and probably had it been otherwise they would have missed like an old friend the kindly *aroma* to which custom had so familiarized them. Indeed, they used to say that the "gentlemen who paid the rint," were *such* company and looked so comfortable basking round the fire, not to speak of their usefulness to all and sundry in the shape of pillows, that they would have felt quite dull without them; and a common sight it was to see the whole family of the cottar from the youngest piccaninny upwards resting their heads on their warm porcine pillows in placid slumber, while an occasional pleased grunt from the pigs attested their satisfaction in turn at

the domestic function they fulfilled. Behind the peat fire stood upright a large rounded flagstone as a backing to the fire, and right above this was the hole in the roof called the "lum," towards which the smoke curled its way upwards. From the "ben" opened benwards a door into another room which its signs showed to be a sleeping apartment. The roof was all black and glistening with peat-tar smoke, whose sombre hue was relieved here and there by finely-reddened cod and ling depending from the rafters, long strings of sillocks forming into the favourite "scrag," and an occasional more substantial flitch of pork also undergoing an unlaboured process of curing. Along the eaves of the room, in exceptional cases, a small square of glass about eight inches diameter did duty for a window, and not infrequently the blue ether was admitted without even this civilizing medium. A few yards from the door of the "but," leaving just enough room to wedge through by the houseside, stood the conventional "midden," rising high enough sometimes to overtop the eaves, and side by side with it, of course, the attendant "slough of despond," composed of its pungent exudations. Forming a continuation of the "but," or separately, as the case might be, was the barn, where in the winter months could be heard the cheersome beck of the flail, and could be seen the flailsman leaning over the lower half of his door munching grains of oats, musingly contemplating the white landscape before him and sparrows picking up the fugitive grains, while ever on the alert for a friendly chat with a passing neighbour. This always seemed a happy occupation to the cottar, as if the admirable physical exercise that brought at once into play every muscle of his body and circulated fresh blood through his veins, drowned for the time being every little care attaching to his uneventful life. Fronting the house, some yards distant, and more than equalling it in bulk, stood the stack of peats cut out of the soft moorland bog during the summer months, and which forms the year's fuel of the cottar, unpaid for save by the labour expended. In late years their privileges in this respect have in many places been curtailed. The troughs formed by the peat-cutting have been discovered unsafe to grazing sheep, and the proprietors have further found a source of profit in a rental on the peat-cutting, so that now either small portions of moor are allotted to the cottars, where often the best quality of peat is not to be found, or they have to pay an unaccustomed tax on their fuel.

The average house described was, however, much superior to many, of which a certain Gavin Manson's, I still well remember, was a type. Entrance was effected by crawling nearly on all fours through a low aperture in the mud wall; and during the winter time the occupants had sometimes to be dug out through the avalanche of snowdrift that sloped down from the eaves.

The people seemed, however, to live quite happily thus; to see

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no inconvenience or drawback in their primitive mode of life, and were as intelligent and respectably lived, if less educated than now. They knew nothing of the refinements and luxuries of wealth, and not knowing did not miss them; and so from the cradle to the grave they passed their unambitious lives, as their forefathers had done before them, unharassed and uncurtailed by the feverish struggle after wealth of the great cities and outside world.

A strong devotional spirit among the Caithness people was mixed with a good deal of superstition concurrent with an embryo state of education and enlightenment. They had a strong belief in the supernatural, in fairies, goblins, and ghosts, and many were the stories told, *all literally true*, of the doings and vagaries of these. The cemetery was a place only to be passed in couples, and by the extra brave, at night. Numerous fairy cairns existed which none but the most rash would ever stir a stone of, and clear and veracious histories were given of the successive calamities that befel each ill-fated individual who had dared to disturb them. The "will-o'-the-wisp" seems to have been now and again met with in crossing the moors, and long thrilling stories were told of the pursuit of travellers by this wandering spirit. The escape of a hedgehog belonging to my brother, which he had just got and which was not yet publicly known, created quite a panic in the country side, and awful forebodings were circulated of the doomed fate of certain families near whom it had taken up its abode in a certain stone quarry, and who having caught a glimpse of it were supposed to have seen their "forgan," a foreshadowed fate. The excitement culminated one day when the "foul fiend" was crushed to atoms by a combined and desperate attack from the threatened families, and the village rang with the victory over the evil one! To the great discomfiture of the heroes the facts gradually leaked out, and to the great grief of the owner, who had been a daily and awe-struck hearer of the ghostly stories without ever connecting them with his poor pet.

As observed, the Caithness people are as a rule devout, zealous in church attendance, and rigid Sabbatarians after their own peculiar stern interpretation of the Mosaic doctrine. They were oblivious to a walk on Sunday and chat on secular matters, but severely hostile to the innocent gambols of children on that day or a glance at a newspaper or non-consecrated print, and as still, they were strong in sect animosity. Any departure from, or innovation on, their own special code savoured of mental depravity or corruption; and to the present day the English Church, with its ritual and organ, is but a degree above the "dark abyss of papacy." The Bible was not only their guiding text-book but their great *répertoire* of knowledge, present, past, and future, it being a common thing to hear that "nothing ever existed that was not to be found there, and whatever was not there must be

wrong." Co-existent with this stage of mental development was a weakness for the "drap"—this same drop not always having paid the national revenue—and which came to the front not only on high festivals, market days, weddings and the like, but used to evolve itself at intervals, like infectious waves, and too often culminated in a round of free fights. These tussles did not always end with the occasion, but combatants who had deemed their prowess at stake would present themselves next morning at their adversaries' door and politely solicit a renewal of hostilities till a decisive adjustment should be effected.

Now times have so far changed that the whisky bottle is far less of a necessity to them even for the celebration of a happy new year. Still may be seen the young men, bottle and glass in hand, ushering in the day by patrolling the countryside to flirt with the village maidens and treat all and sundry to the brimming welcome; but they no longer think it necessary to finish up with savage pugilism on the common, where they have assembled for their wonted game of shinty. Education and growing enlightenment are opening up to them new views and broader aspects of life. The great emigration wave has reached those who rarely if ever stirred from home, and news of good times from across the seas has stimulated them to fresh enterprise and a wider knowledge of the world they live in, till now Caithness people are to be largely met with in most quarters of the world. Detachments of the blue-ribbon army may be seen now on a New Year's Day promenading the country roads in lieu of former detachments sometimes scudding under more sail than they could carry. Even the sight of these champions of teetotalism in a country place where all are known to each other is found to exercise a good effect in shaming down an intemperance which little pains had been taken to conceal.

One of the prettiest sights of the far north is the country weddings. The first sign of the approaching ceremony is the appearance of the bridegroom's party advancing along the road in couples towards the church, headed by the bridegroom. The women are all in white muslin, with a broad blue or pink ribbon crossing down over the shoulder like an officer's sash, and with wreaths of flowers in their hair, while their partners disport their Sunday black, and white gloves complete the array of all. After the bridegroom's party have taken their seats in church, and a due interval of suspense has elapsed, then appears the bride's party advancing along the road in similar procession, headed by the bride, till they all meet in church. The ceremony over the two companies unite, and led by the newly-married couple march in one long procession towards the barn, which the bride's parents have duly swept and garnished for the marriage feast. Thereafter music and dancing and the steaming bowl prolong the festivities till the small hours of the morning.

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The contract (*kantrag*) or engagement is an important north-country ceremonial preceding the marriage by some weeks, when the suitor visits the house of his fair one, and a mutual expression of opinion is exchanged in the presence of witnesses as to their approval and acceptance of each other; a meeting which sometimes implies much more than is understood in more refined society.

A feature of farm life long cried down and now nearly disappeared is the "bothy" system, which did so much to injure the *morale* of the country. This implied the promiscuous use on large farms of the same room by the men and women servants. Sometimes their box beds would be ranged above each other like berths in a ship, the women's beds, which were uppermost, being reached by vaulting from the edge of those of the men.

The old village school has, of course, given place to the brand new Board school, with its higher system of education and also of vexation to the rural mind; its feeding of brains with what they rarely require in after life instead of teaching their owners how to make life really happier on what means they have by feeding their stomachs better. Taking all in all a skilled teacher of plain cookery would yield incalculably more happiness to the people than the most profound teacher of philosophy. Much of the time that is devoted to hammering into the pupils knowledge that evaporates soon after they leave school and enter upon sea or farm industry, and which is never revived, might be more profitably expended in teaching them plain cooking, the cause and treatment of simple ailments, and such knowledge generally as is required for the practical purposes of their life. An amount of real benefit and comfort would thus be founded which, we venture to say, would infinitely exceed that which the highest country education could confer. What profits it them if they know the chronology to a day and hour of a parcel of kings and queens long numbered with the majority, or even if they know the biggest river or highest mountain in the world, if they do not know how to cure a flitch of pork, make a suet dumpling, or cook fish, or in short the simplest rules of economical housewifery. But to return to the school. That of my native village was a type of the class, and compared with the present imposing edifice, a very unpretentious one-storey building, sub-divided into school-room and school-house. The presiding genius of this arena of learning was a strong, square-built, typical Celt, well known throughout the neighbourhood for his muscular powers, which sundry occasions had served to demonstrate. His favourite exercise, indeed, used to be shattering huge masses of stone in a neighbouring quarry during play-hour to the great profit and edification of the admiring quarrymen; so it may be supposed he had little fear of insubordination among his flock. The interior of the school-room showed the usual stone floor, quantum of primitive desks

and forms, a fire-place without grate, and open rafters overhead which served the various purposes of gymnastic appliances, a store for fishermen's nets, and a hiding-place for the more adventurous boys who might seize the chance of the master's absence to ascend thither by means of the sunken bookshelf in the corner. One of these youngsters is still before me, who used to find a favourite retreat upon the pile of nets, whence he listened to the din below and menacing inquiries about himself till the soothing combination induced sleep, only to be broken by the dead stillness succeeding the clamour of the dismissing school; and which, proclaiming a "clear coast," gave him the opportunity of slipping down again unobserved and escaping. Nor to the present day was the mystery of his long disappearances, and sometimes as sudden re-appearance, ever solved or connected with the hazardous and seemingly impracticable ascent to the rafters. School work, as usual, was prefaced each morning by the opening prayer. A peculiarity here was the sudden opening of the teacher's eyes when least expected to petrify with a stare any culprit in the act of stealthy levity. The minister at this time was potent as regarded the school, and whenever he chanced to honour the edifice with a call a half-holiday always followed the august visit. Parents, too, in those days acted literally on the doctrine that to spare the rod was to hate the child, and seemed often to sink natural feeling for the purpose of illustrating this unnatural doctrine. It was a view which the teacher fully corroborated in practice, and the result was a phase of discipline the very idea of which nowadays raises a shudder. On the dark winter mornings many of the scholars had to travel long distances to school, after, perhaps, some preliminary farm work at home. Should one of these chance to be late, or forget his daily contribution of peats to the school fire, down came the relentless tawse on the out-stretched, half-frozen hands, generally, too, irrespective of circumstances. One or more instances of this in a school-full of one to two hundred was an almost daily occurrence during the winter months. But this form of school discipline was, comparatively speaking, mild. During the periodical awakenings of the preceptor to the full responsibilities of his position, which occurred at intervals, the ominous missive of the coiled-up tawse flung at a victim, accompanied by the one word "strip," was too horribly frequent. The painful picture that followed of a boy from 12 to 15 being pursued about the school-room in a paroxysm of terror, in the presence of girls and young women, was as demoralizing to witness as merciless were the strokes of the tawse falling upon the poor semi-nude body of the boy. If the parents ever remonstrated, which is doubtful, they did not do so in the most effectual way of removing their children to the Free School, whose rival doors would have flown open to receive them. Many of the boys who have long since grown to manhood must still remember their

30 *Caithness as a Summer Resort, with Reminiscences.*

early treatment with feelings the reverse of loving towards their quondam preceptor. But an incident occurred which brought this super-Spartan discipline to a not too timely close. A child belonging to a social position different from the bulk of the scholars had for some time been growing pale and thin, to the great anxiety and surprise of his parents, who could discover no accountable cause for the change. It seemed that each morning, on the child's arrival at school, the teacher used to place him face-down across his knee and question him as to his childish sayings at home, threatening him with dire punishment if he concealed aught that he had told his parents or revealed anything of what went on at school, *especially the threats that were then being held over him.* The punishment did not exceed these threats, yet, renewed as they were day by day, such a terror did they inspire in the child, acting on his delicate nervous system, that they hung over him like a nightmare, preying upon his health and spirits, and he dared not make a confidant even of his own mother. Probably had the teacher realized the full effect of his little stratagem he would never have gone so far, for, to say the truth, intentional cruelty was no part of his character, but rather the reverse. At length a chance expression of the child's roused the anxious suspicions of his mother, and led to cross-questioning which elicited the facts. The storm of maternal indignation that followed showed at once to the child the importance of all those threats that had so paralyzed him and the protecting power of his parents. At the same time it led to an investigation which put a stop to the worst forms of school discipline.

Along the sea-board of Caithness the great mainstay of the people lies in the stores of the sea, whose industry centres in the great fishing station of Wick, the largest of its kind in Britain. Though the dirtiest and most uninviting of towns, it is yet a place worth visiting during the herring season in autumn, if only to behold the spectacle of fifteen hundred boats filing out of the harbour each evening for the "far sea," and again in the morning to watch them returning laden with the spoils of the deep, some of them to the tune of £70 or £80 value of cargo. Then the cleaning, salting, and packing, wherewith all is made ready for foreign exportation in marvellously quick time by hundreds of fish-bespattered women, who have repaired from all parts of the country for the occasion, is not less interesting. In these operations is worth noting the different expertness of the workers, some making the fish fly from their hands almost too quick for the eye to follow (the whole process of cleaning being done by one jerk of the wrist), while others can never get beyond a regular methodical pace. From the work being contract the former make proportionally greater earnings, which by the close of the season may amount to a handsome sum. During this time the

town is filled by sturdy fair-haired Celts from the north-western islands of Scotland, amounting to two or three thousand in number, all Gaelic-speaking, quiet and respectable, addicted to no particular vice, devout and very gregarious. They hire themselves to the boat-owners for the season, and at its close return again to their families with their hearts rejoicing and their sporrans well lined with their earnings.

A fine night might be less instructively passed than in a herring-boat as it ploughs through the deep shoals of fish and liquid phosphorus emanating from them, the glassy sea around, the pipes of the fishermen in full glow, and the glancing showers of herring every now and again being dropped from the nets into the boat. The town at this time, literally and metaphorically, "stinks of fish," and is a great contrast to the pretty little town on the opposite coast, Thurso, now more and more becoming a favourite resort to wanderers from the far south.

A visit to the north is not complete without seeing the famous John o' Groat's house, though all that now remains of it is but a grassy mound near the beach where it once stood. Our readers will be familiar, perhaps, with the story of how John o' Groat, a great chief, had eight sons, among whom discord sprung up because they could not agree as to precedence in entering the house. Whereupon their father built an octagonal house, with eight doors, so that each might be able to enter at the same time, and which completely solved the difficulty at issue. Ingenious models of the said house are still to be seen among the Caithness people occupying a place of honour on their mantel-pieces. On the sands close by John o' Groat's house are to be found in abundance the famous John o' Groat buckies, which the girls weave into necklaces and other ornaments, and which are identical with the *courie*, or smallest current coin in India. From here may be seen the famous "bore," a straight white ridge of foam extending from the shore to the outlying island of Stronia. The phenomenon is caused by the meeting of the opposing currents that sweep round the north of Scotland, and which in storms rises to a towering wall of tempestuous white.

After all, Caithness, with its wild cliff-barrier and sea-coast grandeur, its "goes," "stacks," and caves, its bracing ocean air, numerous white-sanded bays, and broad heather moors, intersected by trout and salmon streams, and its summer air vocal with myriads of the still non-extinct lark; despite its "grand clearin'" and atrophied trees, is not so desolate and uninviting a place as its first appearance might lead to suppose.

TO THE ARDENNES.

HAMLET says, with regard to the great journey, that "the readiness is all." I am inclined to think that we may say the same of the most insignificant journey. The best traveller is he who is "ready for anything," whether it be accident or pleasure, and the surest way of getting enjoyment out of holiday travel is not to have each day's work cut out, as you would at home, but to let your movements be determined by the humour of the moment or the opportunities that may present themselves. Any evening, at an inn, you may hear of a tempting excursion. If you are a slave to some wretched plan, the chance is lost.

To "walk with" or to "keep company with" a person in the commonest parlance implies intimate acquaintance. In writing this paper I venture to suppose that the holiday tourist desires to become acquainted with the locality in which he proposes to spend a few days or weeks for the sake of a change from his ordinary routine of life. The best way of getting to know a country is to go about it and among its inhabitants on foot, and to make oneself, as far as may be, "of them." From this point of view the way to the Ardennes is treated. And as a proportion of my readers may not have attempted travelling alone in a foreign country, they are offered one or two incidents, derived from a good many years' experience, which may have the effect of smoothing the way.

The easiest, and perhaps the most economical, way of reaching the Ardennes from London is by the Great Eastern Railway, from Liverpool Street to Harwich, and thence by the steamers of that company to Antwerp. This route is also the most comfortable for those who would think about the sea-passage as little as possible. The vessels leave Harwich at ten, or as soon after that hour as the passengers' baggage can be got on board. The open sea is reached at about eleven, and the mouth of the Scheldt somewhere about five the next morning. So if a passenger retires to rest, with his usual night-cap, as soon as any motion is perceptible, he may wake up in the early morning to find the steamer hissing through smooth water once more, the interval of sea having been passed unconsciously. Moreover, the Great Eastern Company's steamers are so large and steady that you may often cross to Antwerp or Rotterdam without feeling as if you were at sea, so far as any inconvenient movement goes.

Before imagining ourselves on the way to the Continent for a few days' or weeks' holiday, it may be worth while to touch upon the *desiderata* or *quasi-desiderata* on which the enjoyment of a journey depends. These are:—companions, money, books of information and guides, and what are called "tourists' requisites."

If a young traveller has confidence enough in himself to believe that he can make his way about alone, let him do so. He will always find the inhabitants of a foreign country ready in the friendliest manner to assist him with information if he asks for it pleasantly. It may be worth while here to remark that probably no one but an Englishman enters a shop abroad without raising his hat, or leaves the place without similar salutation. In England, when an Englishman raises his hat on entering a place of business, people smell a "commercial" traveller. On the Continent, even if a man were taken for a commercial, he would be thought none the worse for that. It is only in the great land of commerce that trade is an ineffaceable stigma.* On the Continent, in a general way, people seem glad, not irked, as we are, by being spoken to by a stranger. Let me give a case in point. During the war of 1870, while Metz was being beleaguered, I was staying in a hotel at Saarbrücken, the point at which hostilities commenced. On the table of the room where the company was assembled, I observed an innocent-looking object not unlike a quart ink-bottle. My curiosity was aroused, and I ventured to ask a gentleman on the opposite side of the table what the article was. He instantly drew a chair and begged me to come and sit beside him, and then told me that what I saw was a French shell, a sample, to keep up the commercial simile, of those which had fallen in the town. The rest of the evening was spent in agreeable talk with my informant, who described, *inter alia*, the b-r-r-r of the mitrailleuses, and how the inhabitants got used to the horrible sound. There was a pleasant story that the French shells, being loaded with damp powder, did not go off when they ought. Finding they did no harm, German ladies took to placing the shells on their mantelpieces for chimney ornaments. Only, it is said, when the powder became dry, the shells "went off" one after another. Those that remained were buried by order.

I was once in Padua, on my first excursion to the Continent, and had occasion to ask my way of two young fellows in the street. They proved to be students of the famous university of *Padova la Dotta*, and the incident ended in our strolling about arm-in-arm and spending the afternoon and evening together. They could not speak English nor I Italian; French had to be eked out with an occasional word of Latin. In Belgium exactly the same desire

* Dogs are the greatest snobs abroad. They bark at you if you walk through a village carrying a pack, especially if you are shabbily dressed.

to be agreeable is found. If you are staying at an inn, you cannot pass the host or hostess, or any of the family, however young they may be, without receiving a bow or a smile or a murmured greeting. And in the quieter towns you may be saluted in the street, merely because you are a stranger, and so bidden welcome. So that unless you are particularly anxious to interpose an English barrier of stiffness between you and the inhabitants, it is really best not to have a companion. Indeed, it may be said, I believe without exaggeration, that every English word spoken during a short stay abroad intervenes between you and the natural influences of the locality, lessening by so much the change you seek.

As to money, unless the traveller is going to leave Antwerp the moment he arrives in it, which a new-comer should scarcely desire, he may just as well get change there. Finding out where there is a *bureau de change*, and explaining at the counter for how many sovereigns French money is desired will be a first French exercise, all the better for not being read out of or crammed from a book. One caution is necessary as to making inquiries in a foreign city. Take care that the person you address is tidy-looking, or else he will come with you instead of giving the information, and get a commission out of any transaction after you are gone; or he may attach himself to you until you are at your wits' end to get rid of him. A good way of learning anything in a strange town is to ask of a shopkeeper who may happen to be standing at his door, because he must stay where he is. One has especially to keep clear of hotel touts, who even cross the water in the guise of passengers, and so get acquainted before you know who they are. I was once nicely taken in while endeavouring to preserve myself from the hotel tout. It was in Cremona. I wanted to stay a night in the famous city of violins, so I went into a quiet, domestic-looking *café*, and while sipping a cup of coffee took occasion to ask if there was an hotel near where I could put up on reasonable terms. I had scarcely got the words out when the host, who had been sitting in his shirt sleeves, whipped on a coat, called some one to mind the shop, and stood ready to "run me in" somewhere. I did not assent, and could not get any information from the gentleman. He followed me out, and pursued me from street to street for I forget how long. In Verona I have been dogged for half-a-day by a *valet de place*, who wanted to take me to the battle-field of Custozza, then new to history. These are, however, annoyances which belong to the larger cities which are passed through.

Books are admirable companions at home, but the walking tourist is better without them, even if they are guide-books. He will find use for every inch of space in the pack or knapsack he carries. Besides, if he is accustomed to find pleasure in books at home, it will be one more step towards a complete change to abstain from reading. If the traveller is healthily constituted, he

will find such a state of content brought about by merely being in motion in the open-air all day that books are not required, that wants disappear, that ailments are forgotten, and that mere existence is a pleasure. But any one who proposes visiting the Ardennes may very profitably use the spare hours of a few evenings in getting up the subject just before starting.

The guides that I would suggest are Murray's Handbooks of Belgium and of France, Macquoid's "In the Ardennes," Moyr Smith's "Hades of the Ardenne," and Bradshaw's "Continental Guide." I would study Murray's Handbooks, and make note of anything worth seeing or of the associations connected with any particular place. But undoubtedly the most useful work which can be perused by way of preparation is Mrs. Macquoid's account of a picturesque journey through a part of the Ardennes, with fifty illustrations of noteworthy scenes, figures, and objects, by Mr. Macquoid. It is a volume of three or four hundred good-sized pages. Although it is modestly said that but a part of the district was visited, the tourist will be well informed indeed if he is charged with all the suggestions which arise from the drives recounted in this book. To name only a few places, we hear of Dinant, Bouillon and the Semois, the valley of the Amblève, Spa, La Roche, and Laon. In the illustrations we see peasants and their cottages, the ancient buildings, the boars, the deer and the goats, the rivers, overhanging rocks, forest drives, the rushing streams, and the sylvan solitudes as they are found "in Arden." The "Hades of the Ardenne" is a light and sketchy book, mainly devoted to the curious grotto of Han. It is, as it were, a supplement to Mrs. Macquoid's more comprehensive work, inasmuch as that book does not describe the grotto. I would suggest the "Hades of the Ardenne" as just suited to while away the tedious steaming up the dreary, oozy Scheldt, an hour or two of which remain after getting up on board the steamer which is bound for Antwerp.

"Bradshaw," apart from its time-tables, is a most wonderful repertory of information about different countries. I find the best plan, with a view to a walking tour, is to take out the leaves which refer to every locality that there is a chance of one's visiting and the corresponding time-tables. You can put a stiff paper wrapper about these pages, and so have a guide weighing an ounce or two. The large scale map, too, of "Bradshaw," which reaches to Italy, is, taken out and mounted on linen by itself, an admirable aid on the journey and valuable for reference afterwards.

The one complete guide I would take with me is Mr. Percy Lindley's, which costs a penny, weighs not two oz., and being octavo size, is so thin as to make no difference in your pack. This guide has illustrations which show how pleasant a land you are about to visit, practical directions and indications of routes, and a map. I might add, as worth carrying, a little book called "A £10

Tour," which is a record of a month spent in the Ardennes. I do not think it weighs more than six ounces. At any rate it is worth looking at, and may be recommended as pleasant reading for a railway journey—let us say that from Liverpool Street to Harwich.

I saw the other day a book which is printed to inform the walking tourist what he should wear and what he should carry. But for this, I should have thought that a man of ordinary intelligence who did not contemplate mountaineering might very well be left to find his own way in these matters. He has a given amount of space, and has only to fill it with such changes of raiment as the space will admit. However, as the book gives lists of articles and clothes, it may be useful, perhaps amusing, to copy one list, and to examine the items for a few moments.

"LIST I.—1, Boots with porpoise-hide laces; 2, hat with guard; 3, puggerah and safety-pins; 4, coat (flannel), with six pockets; 5, trousers to match, with four pockets; 6, gaiters; 7, socks or stockings; 8, flannel shirt; 9, slip of lama (*sic*) or white silk neckerchief; 10, large white Indian silk pocket-handkerchief; 11, two good leather purses; 12, whistle, hung to button-hole; 13, pocket-knife, with two blades, corkscrew, borer for straps, pick and tweezers; 14, pocket-book with court plaster, diachylon, nail scissors, and address cards; 15, match-box and vestas."

This list is "totted up" by the author of the book to £7 5s. 6d. I will venture to give my own opinion on some of the items. There is no occasion for special boots. Every man who is fit to go on an excursion will walk several miles a day in the course of his ordinary avocations. Let him walk abroad in the boots so used; the older they are the better, so long as they will stand a few weeks' wear, because you know you will not hurt your feet. I have even gone to Switzerland and walked on mule passes in boots which seemed to give corns at home. After the first day no inconvenience was felt, and the corns disappeared. If a man has an undress hat—deer-stalker is, I think, the name—that he is tired of or has cast off, that will be the covering "for the head," and it will, most likely, stick on without a guard. I would not speak too lightly of puggerahs, but I crossed the equator twelve times before knowing what a puggerah was. As to coat, trousers, &c., I would say if a man has a discarded suit of clothes, or one that he is tired of, let the holiday tourist use up that, taking care that the pockets and linings are made sound. Sailors are, I suppose, our greatest travellers, being always on the move. If you ask an old salt why he goes to sea, he will tell you "to wear his old clothes out."

We are prescribed "two purses, a whistle, pocket-knife, corkscrew, borer for straps, tweezers, pocket-book with plaster, &c." Purses are very good, but I cannot recollect ever taking one, being more concerned about the money. I have found it is

a convenient plan to have several little bags, one each for the different kinds of money likely to be required. Thus, one would hold English sovereigns, another English silver after the English steamer was left, another French money after a French-speaking country was left, and so on. While in a foreign country, the loose silver of that country would be in the waistcoat pocket, as English money here. My bags are carried in two inner waistcoat pockets, made on purpose. As for the whistle, not being an amateur policeman, I do not know its use. Every man, I should have thought, carried a knife about him ordinarily, and so with the pocket-book. Plaister is a good addition, but what is the corkscrew for? I once made a "Continental tour of eight days." One of the "points" of the journey was that not a farthing was expended in outfit. I may add that one of our best weekly reviews spoke of the "Continental tour" as indicating overflowing happiness and good health. Q.E.D.

I believe it is advertised as among the attractions of the Ardennes, that you can reach them within twenty-four hours from London. This is done by leaving Antwerp almost immediately on arrival, and getting on to Brussels by train, and thence by train to Namur. From Namur steamers ply to Dinant, which is a kind of head-quarters for the traveller in the Ardennes. But I would suggest to any one who has not seen Antwerp spending the first day in that city. The portion of Bradshaw's "Continental Guide for Belgium," which the traveller has with him, will be a very handy companion in the streets and churches and museums. In the evening it would be well to take the train as far as Malines and stay there the night, if only for the sake of the carillon. The first time I heard it I was in a street near, but out of sight of the cathedral. All at once it seemed as if there were a musical box in the air overhead. Being strange, I did not instantly understand what the sound was.

In the morning, Brussels can easily be reached in time for a train which will bring the tourist to Namur so as to go by an early steamer to Dinant. Most of the guides, I believe, counsel approaching the Ardennes by way of Dinant; but if the traveller chooses to continue his railway journey beyond Namur as far as a small station called Poix St. Hubert, he will find himself not two hours' walk from St. Hubert, a small town. Jemelle, a station a little farther on, is not a day's walk from St. Roche, the heart of the Ardennes. Farther still is a small railway station called Libramont, which had to be used by those who went to Sedan from Brussels during the war of 1870. Sedan is on the ordinary railway from Brussels to Paris, but travellers could not go that way. Libramont is about twenty miles from Bouillon, one of the most beautiful spots in the Ardennes. The traveller cannot have a finer or more interesting walk than that from Bouillon to Sedan, in the course of which he may see Bazeilles, which was wrecked, and

Balan, a suburb, which, after the capitulation, looked like the houses at Primrose Hill after the Regent's Park explosion. Sedan did not suffer at all. The country is particularly beautiful about Sedan. During the war, a dam was thrown across the Meuse, making a lake of it in the basin which is formed by the undulating hills which surround the city. The trees upon them wore then the most glorious hues of autumn, so that the traveller had indeed a picture before him. Victor Hugo tells us how he was affected by the country about Sedan a year after the battle. He was returning to Paris from Brussels. He had been asleep, and was woke by the stopping of the train:—

“Une rivière coulait à côté du chemin-de-fer, claire, autour d'une île gaie et verte. Cette verdure était si épaisse que les poules d'eau, en y abordant, s'y enfouissaient et y disparaissaient. La rivière s'en allait à travers une vallée qui semblait un jardin profond. Il y avait là des pommiers qui faisaient penser à Eve et des saules qui faisaient songer à Galatée. . . . Il y avait au loin les voix d'oiseaux et tout près de moi des voix d'enfants, comme deux chansons d'anges mêlées; la limpidité universelle m'enveloppait; toute cette grace et toute cette grandeur me mettaient dans l'âme une aurore. . . . Tout à coup un voyageur demanda, ‘Quel est cet endroit ci?’ Un autre répondit: ‘Sédan.’ Je tressaillis. Ce paradis était un sépulchre.”

One who had visited this beautiful spot in the month of the capitulation could hardly see newly-turned earth without thinking of Sedan. But the graves have now the green of sixteen years.

CHARLES F. BLACKBURN.

WILL JACKSON'S RIDE.

A TALE OF THE TAVERN TALKERS.

“THE Tavern Talkers” is the name of a club. It is a club of outers as well as of talkers; and, as its members say very little about themselves, very little is known of them. They are not, however, a selfish coterie of outers; consequently, whatever may appear under the above heading they have no wish to withhold from the public ear, if the public ear is so attuned as to want it.

On a certain pleasant evening of August, 1884, darkness was beginning to seek admittance through the many windows of the “Devon Inn,” near Philadelphia, and its advent was stoutly resisted by the light and life of Devon’s stately interior, when the eight members of the Tavern Talkers and their single guest drew their chairs round the altar of confabulation in their *sanctum* at the said inn. As, following the sensible example of the celestials, our friends do not reveal secrets which are born and nurtured of small talk, the happenings of that evening matter not to the barbarians, until a certain point was reached when some one suddenly remarked:

“Why, gentlemen, we are forgetting our new programme. Neckar, where’s your story?”

“True,” said the president. “Mr. Neckar, your story, please; and I would take the liberty to suggest that it be a cycling one, for the benefit of Mr. S——. Mr. S——, we must enlist you in the brotherhood of the ‘wheel.’”

Mr. S——, the visitor, bowed, while our respected friend Neckar lay back in his chair, looked at the president inquiringly for a moment, and then commenced:

“Gentlemen, I am victimized, am I? Well, so be it. Some of you, doubtless, have heard of Will Jackson’s ride with a railroad train out West; most of you, however, have not. Mr. S—— I know has not; so, with your permission, we will have it.”

“Go ahead, Ninon,” was the general chorus; the president, with an almost imperceptible wink at the story-teller, adding:

“Oh, yes, I remember the incident—a capital one.”

“Well, gentlemen, you must know that some short time ago a friend of mine, a Mr. Jackson, known also to some of you perhaps, went West on a business trip, taking his bicycle with him,

and out there, you know, Mr. S——, a bicycle is a great rarity. In fact, in many places where Mr. Jackson sojourned, the people didn't know what to make of the machine, and the most extravagant surmises were indulged in by them as to its properties, &c. For instance, at one place the inhabitants, who must have been an exceptionally bright lot of people, wanted to know if our friend could get up enough speed on the velocipede to cover six miles in an hour; while in another locality, evidently one of the liveliest spots of the live West, he was credited with being able to go fifty miles an hour. Now bicyclers, as a class, bear a remarkably good reputation for veracity as compared with the votaries of other out-door pastimes—for instance, as compared with—well, comparisons are odious.”

Here the story-teller pulled short up to knock the ashes from his cigar, for a couple of other cigars had ceased to do their office and there were evidently champions of “other out-door pastimes” present.

“Well, what I was saying, or what I meant to say, was this,” said the narrator, “that such a state of affairs as I have just mentioned was very embarrassing to a man of Mr. Jackson's nature, for he liked his bicycle, and, indeed, all bicycles, too well to allow the idea to prevail that they could only get along at the rate of six miles an hour, while, on the other hand, like all bicyclers, he was too truthful to allow for a moment the impression to go about that he could ride fifty miles an hour on his bicycle. The continual questioning relative to the matter was annoying, too, and he was wishing for something out of the common to turn up fully to proclaim the properties and powers of the machine, when fortune kindly threw in his way the opportunity which he wished for. Just as he was giving up all hope of such an opportunity cropping up, the desired loop-hole, through which he might squeeze something to astonish the natives, laid itself so to speak at his feet, through the agency of what—of whom do you think? Why, of an engineer on one of the locomotives of the M. & M. Railway.

“Mr. Jackson happened to be at Lyresburg, in Missouri, and, as usual, much interest was taken there among the people in his bicycle. In this place the prevailing sentiment was that of ridicule for both the machine and its rider, and the remarks of the engineer whom I have before referred to were so offensive that Jackson got quite roiled, so roiled, in fact, that on the engineer making some remark more than usually strong, he there and then offered to race him, the said engineer, to Stokleyville, fifty miles down the road. The engineer was to take a cattle train of fifty cars over that section of the road on the afternoon of the day on which the bet was made, and Jackson agreed to have out his bicycle and race him. Now, all along from Lyresburg to Stokleyville a cinder-path runs by the rail-

road, so that Jackson's proposed attempt to beat the train does not appear so wild a venture as you might at first suppose it to be. The appointed hour came, and the whole town turned out to see the train and the bicycler start, and a telegram was sent on to Stokleyville for all the people there to turn out also and witness the termination of the novel race. Well, the moment for starting arrived, the whistle sounded, the train moved, and Jackson was just about to mount, when suddenly he flung his machine into the hands of the telegraph clerk, who formed one of the gaping crowd, and saying, 'By gosh, I've left my saddle-bag in the office!' he rushed into the operator's sanctum, followed by cries of 'Look sharp!' 'Make haste!' &c. He wasn't gone any time before he returned, carrying the saddle-bag, which he flung on to the handles of his machine, and in half a second he was closing up on the last car of the train, which was already well under way. Now, the people outside the telegraph office, of course, could not very well be aware of the fact that Jackson understood telegraphy, nor were they aware that the operator at Stokleyville was a bosom friend of his. The following message, received by the Stokleyville operator while the Lyresburg population were engaged in watching the start of the race, would have opened wider some already wide-open eyes and explained clearly why Jackson came to leave his saddle-bag in the operator's office:

“‘Lyresburg.

“‘DARLING BILL,—Grease the railroad tracks two miles this side of Stokleyville. See you later.

“‘WILL JACKSON.’

“The above was the telegram which caused Bill Stone's eyes to open also to a considerable extent as he perused the curious document in his office at Stokleyville. Bill bore the reputation of never allowing a friend to 'get left,' as he termed it, so there was something peculiarly suggestive in the deliberate manner in which he folded up the despatch and then took an hour and a half's leave off from work.

“Well, the train got the start of Jackson, but before it gained any speed, he had pulled up beside the last one of the fifty cars, where he determined to stick as long as possible. Now, the engineer was as fully persuaded that the bicycler would give up after five miles as he was of the fact that if he went much faster than twenty miles an hour along at least thirty miles of the road before him he would run a good chance of wrecking his train. So he put on a fifteen-mile-an-hour pace, and sent the fireman back to tell the 'velocipeder' to 'wake up.' Now, Mr. S——, you know that fifteen miles an hour is nothing to a bicycler, so Jackson felt pretty good when he found the engineer so accommodating; but to the injunction of the fireman to 'wake

up,' he answered by inquiring if the engineer was asleep? The fireman went forward to the engine and told the engineer of the inquiry, and the engineer said, 'Well, he's a plucky 'un; tell him to pull up and have a talk while he can, for we will bid him good-bye five miles outside of Stokleyville.'

"The fireman gave the message to Jackson, who told him to go back and tell the engineer to 'hold his wind,' for he would want it all before the race was up. When the engineer heard this second message he laughed, and sat down to have a smoke and to ruminate on the prospect of being a slightly richer man at the next station. Over an hour passed, and then the fireman, unable to curtail his curiosity, looked behind.

"'Is he there?' asked the engineer.

"'I'm blest if he ain't,' said the fireman, drawing in his head.

"'Put more coal on,' said the engineer, 'and don't look behind again for the next ten mile.'

"The fireman busied himself with his duty, the engineer smoked his pipe and kept an eye ahead, and Jackson kept up his fifteen-mile-an-hour gait behind, to the extreme edification of a couple of brakemen, who watched him from the rear car. Ten more miles had been covered, and, to tell the truth, our cycling friend was getting rather tired, when the engineer sang out, 'Hallo, Jim! see if that chap ain't out of sight; I bet he's a mile or so behind.' The fireman chucked his cigar-stump into the fire to help keep things going while he stretched his neck to reconnoitre. The next minute his surprise at what greeted his eyes on looking behind found vent in words, as he shouted excitedly to the engineer:

"'Well, may I never handle a shovel again, if he ain't there still! and I'll be durned if he ain't agone and pulled up on a dozen cars!'

"The engineer threw down his pipe and looked behind, and there, sure enough, was the bicycler as large as life, working away for all he was worth. 'Well, if that ain't a caution! Come, Jim, slap on some more of the feed, and we'll give him the good-bye; we've just got half an hour to get into Stokleyville.'

"The fireman shovelled in the coal, and by-and-by the train commenced to move faster as the engineer let her out. The fireman looked back; Jackson had lost a couple of car-lengths, the train moved faster, and a few moments later the engineer looked behind; the bicycler had lost the remaining ten car-lengths and was at the extreme end of the train.

"'Pile on the coal, Jim,' said the engineer, 'and we'll soon own the twenty-five dollars.'

"Another mile went over, and the fireman looked back once more.

"'Where is he now?' asked his *confrère*.

"'He must be round the bend,' said the fireman; 'yes, there

he is, just coming round now; why, we've left him quarter of a mile.'

"There remained now but a four-mile stretch to Stokleyville, and every moment the train was drawing ahead of the bicycler, who was evidently getting tired. Before another mile was completed Jackson was nearly half a mile behind; another mile went over, a sharp curve appeared ahead, and the engineer slowed up very complacently and good-humouredly, for his cycling antagonist was toiling along some three-quarters of a mile in the rear. The curve was reached, round it went the train very slowly, and then there lay ahead the straight track into the town.

"'Fire in some more coal,' said the engineer. But before the fireman had time to comply with the order, the train, which had been travelling very slowly, came almost suddenly to a dead stop. 'Puff' went the engine, 'whist, whist,' went the wheels; the train moved forward a little again, and then stopped again, the engine all the time working furiously.

"'What the devil is the matter now?' said the engineer as he looked at the fireman.

"That worthy's look of blank astonishment did not tend to abate his surprise, nor did the lugubrious answer vouchsafed by the fireman of 'guess we're busted' throw much light on the state of affairs.

"'Shut off steam,' said the engineer as he jumped down on to the track and passed round the engine. Everything appeared to be straight. 'Let her go,' he shouted.

"'Puff, puff,' and a half revolution of the wheels without their gripping the track left matters *in statu quo*.

"'Well, what in thunder does it all mean?' he said; then he walked forward and rubbed his hand over the rails, and when he took it up it was covered with dark grease.

"By this time all the train-hands came running up to see what was the matter, and just as the engineer, who had at last taken in the situation, was about to open on them the vials of his wrath, a dark shadow passed along the side of the track.

"'The bicycler!' shouted the whole crowd. 'The bicycler did it! hold him! stop him!' It was too late, however; they might as well have tried to overtake a limited express train going at full speed as to endeavour to catch our friend Jackson, who had shot by them like a flash, for he well knew that, though the engineer could have nothing more than suspicions as to who had played the trick, still he might fancy that those suspicions would justify his taking out his revenge on his cycling competitor. So, with a wild whoop of triumph, Jackson shot by the troop of train hands at a pace which defied any pursuit which might be attempted on Mother Nature's appliances for locomotion.

"It would be futile to attempt to depict the chagrin of the engineer, or the comically nonplussed appearance of his com-

panions. After the first moment of surprise had vanished, he and the fireman made a rush for the sand-box, but, as in the case of Old Mother Hubbard and her cupboard, when they got there the sand-box was bare—thanks to the foresight of Jackson—and then, to finish up in rhyme, didn't they swear. Half an hour after leaving the happy crowd Jackson rode into Stokleyville, and the train steamed into the town shortly after, amidst the hootings and jibings of the whole population, the engineer and train hands being half dead from the effects of a prolonged exploration for a sand-pit, and from their exertions in doctoring the fixed-up rails with the poor apology for sand which they were fortunate enough to discover. And so, gentlemen, most satisfactorily closed Will Jackson's ride."

"Thank you, Mr. Neckar," said the president; "and, gentlemen, before we adjourn I just wish to remark that on our next meeting night we may, perhaps, have the pleasure of Mr. Chris. Wheeler's company, when we must have something from him."

NINON NECKAR.

“IN THE MACBETH COUNTRY.”

(*With an Illustration.*)

THE “Brighton of the North,” as the inhabitants fondly love to call the quiet little town of Nairn, is a convenient and comfortable resting-place and centre for walks in the Macbeth country.

A little knowledge of Gaelic would not be a disadvantage to those who like to go afoot through the country, for, as James I. proudly said, “he had a towne in auld Scotland, the towne of Nairn, which was so large that the folk at the one end didna ken the language at the other,” and the English of the peasantry is now scarcely to be understood, but the pleasure of making out their homely speech adds to the interest of the scenery. On a sunny day in August we started to walk round Cawdor and Kilravock Castles, and to find, if possible, a certain “Loch of the Clans,” where some remnants of “pit dwellings” were said to be existing.

After leaving the town the route lay between highly cultivated fields of yellow corn and rich pasturage, not a bit of ground seemed wasted, and the scene was a striking contrast to the wild savagery of the western highlands, whose heights were dimly visible in the far distance.

A short cut to the left led across a field and over a bridge, beneath which the river Nairn ran clear as crystal over its smoothly worn pebbly bed; the way then skirted a fir-clad hill. From this height the road wound down to a rich plain, with well-to-do cottages studded here and there, and soon, at a bend in the road, were seen the towers of Cawdor Castle.

A little inn lay on the right, some short distance from the castle gate, and a tent was erected upon the green near it for a religious service.

This tent, with its preaching desk erected within sound of the church bell, reminded one of that strange religious sect calling themselves “The Men,” that but a few years ago obtained such a hold upon the simple highland natures; a sect not extinct, if the Rev. author of “Strombuy” may be credited.

On one occasion in Caithness “The Men” held a meeting of nine to criticize a service in which the minister had used the term that “Christ had suffered a temporary hell.” Now one of “the Men” was confident “temporary” meant trifling, and anything trifling

connected with hell was a damnable heresy, and the nine agreed with his decision. A deputation was sent to the manse ordering that the erring preacher should not be allowed to preach again, or else that another minister should preach *at the same time* from a tent near the church. The pastor in charge had to agree to this, and as soon as the bell had finished, the opposition preacher commenced, and all the people left the church and filled the tent, leaving him who understood not the word “temporary” to gaze down on entirely empty seats. The habits of this sect, in their wearing a dress, and their late and excited meetings, are worth studying in comparison with the present Salvation Army; and so also is the intense Tartuffianism their bigotry safely led them into.

A bright rippling stream ran gurgling by just beyond the tent, and pleasant it was to lay and rest on the soft turf, beneath a wide-spreading sycamore, and watch the sparkling water come out from beneath the high one-arched bridge, gently to be drawn under a little tiny sluice into a canal that measured perhaps one-and-a-half yards wide. But not all the water of the burn passes beneath the sluice, some yet in freedom glides still on over a platform of fir logs, and then leaps musically down into a pebbly pool beneath, above which wave the cool leaves of some ancient ash trees.

A fine avenue of sycamores and ash trees leads up to the arched gateway of the castle, and through this archway is seen a lovely peep.

Soft sloping lawns, dotted with here and there bright flower-beds, glide down from the dark woods above and surround the grey walls that now rise from these grassy slopes, instead of from the dark waters of the moat. The great square keep is half covered with ivy, and at each corner hangs out the little tourelle, with its pointed roof, the characteristic of the Norman homes.

The entrance to the house is over the draw-bridge, still ready to be raised, as formerly, by its heavy timber gear. Round stone seats are on either side, and facing the visitor is the mouth of a great cannon, with its stone shot lying by its side. In spite of this, the entrance to the grounds now speaks of nought but peace and calm. As said King Duncan:

“This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air,
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
Banquo, this guest of summer,
The temple-loving martlet, does approve,
By his loved mansionary, that the heaven’s breath
Smells wooingly here: No jutty, freize,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendant bed.”

But the entrance to the house quickly dispels peaceful thoughts,

and calls up the old turbulent and savage scenes these walls have witnessed.

The supreme interest of Cawdor Castle to most Englishmen must ever be that which connects it with Shakespeare's "Macbeth."

What does it matter for the moment if it were utterly impossible that Lady Macbeth could ever have walked along these corridors and up these narrow stairs? Here is the place that Shakespeare pictures, and for the time let history be ignored, and let memory conjure up each scene and live through the play, not on a mimic stage, but where the thing was done.

But in addition to this Shakespearian interest, the whole and genuine history of the castle, even from its first being founded, is full of matter that would well repay research.

The reason for choosing its site was a curious one. The old castle was some half-mile distant, and when the ruling Thane of Cawdor would have built another and a greater castle, there came to him in a vision the command to bind the coffer containing the gold (which he had carefully prepared for the payment of the building) to the back of an ass, and then to set the ass loose, and at the third hawthorn tree at which the ass stopped there was he to build his castle. Like most of the thanes of that age, he was more obedient to visions than to the commands or wishes of mortal man. He tied the coffer upon the ass's back, and the ass stopped at a third hawthorn tree near the banks of the rippling burn, and here the castle was built; and as a positive proof that the story is perfectly true, in the cellar of the castle still stands, where it grew, the hard trunk of an old hawthorn tree, much stripped and scored by the senselessly acquisitive tourist.

On the ground floor are the living apartments of the castle, hung with tapestry, the colours of which are still good.

Some of the scenes from "Don Quixote," especially one where the gaunt don is reading amongst his books, are very expressive. Winding up from these rooms by a very narrow stone staircase one passes into the room where present tradition says Macbeth murdered the King Duncan.

The room, a large, white, bare bedroom, now is used by one of the daughters of the house, who thus proves her disdain for Shakespeare and her belief in history, for how could one sleep in this room without its being filled up by the bleeding and helpless body of the king?

As the room is entered from the narrow winding tower stairway, "the handle toward my hand," is a painted dagger, pointing onward to the room, and by the bedside on the white wall stands out the figure of Macbeth, with horrified air, holding yet the dagger, as when he said, "Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep." Other sketches are on the white walls, the work of some artist who had stayed at the castle.

This imagining of the historic deed to be done here hardly

agrees with the hard fact only known to history, that Duncan was murdered in Bothgowan, which is held to be Gaelic for a smith's hut. The person who slew him, whether with his own hand or not, was Macbeda, the Maarmor of Ross; the ruler, in short, of the district stretching from the Moray Firth to Lochness northwards; but as Shakespeare brought his history down some hundreds of years and described such a castle, the modern tourist may well for the nonce forget history, and live with Shakespeare through "the night that was unruly."

Robert Burns wrote to Gilbert Burns after visiting Cawdor: "I saw the identical bed in which tradition says King Duncan was murdered." And less celebrated tourists may not be ashamed to indulge in the same fancy.

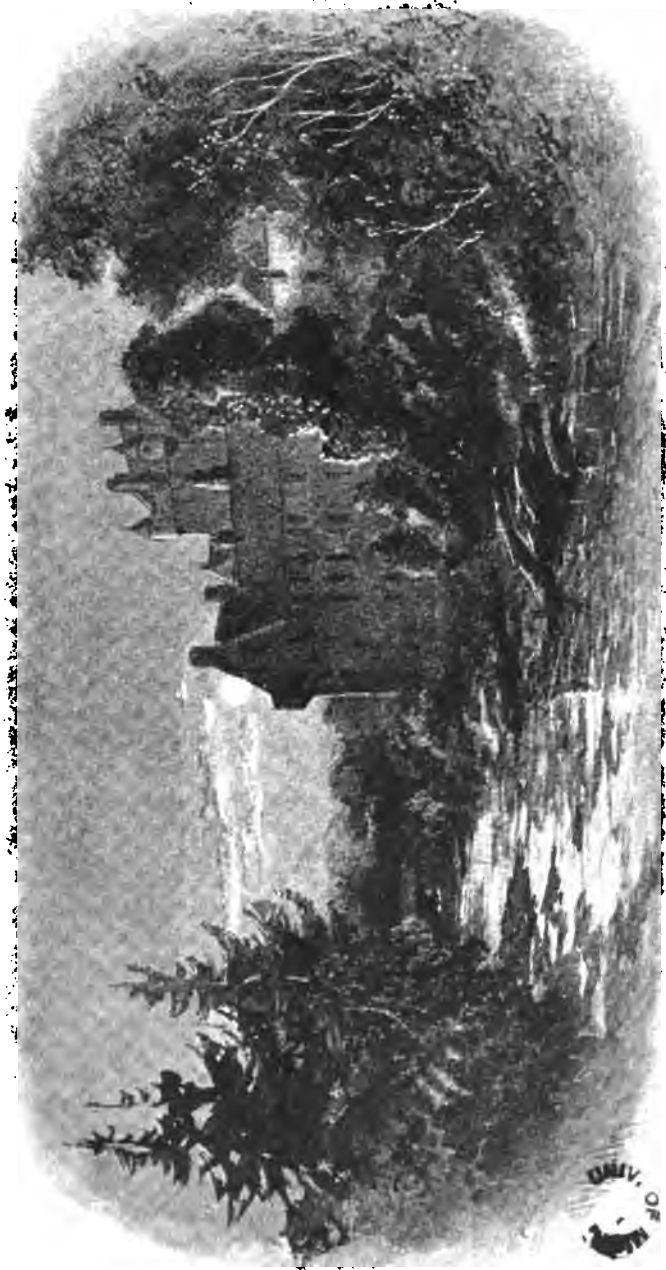
The murder of King Duncan is not the only tragedy with which the walls of Cawdor Castle are connected. Throughout the history of the Cawdors, turbulent and truculent deeds of fierce savagery are always recurring. The story of how the old possessors of the castle, the Calders, lost their hold to the scheming Earl of Argyle, and so allowed the possession of the estate to pass into the hands of the Campbells, is one of abduction and fighting and enslavement.

At a later date, in the reign of Elizabeth, a State paper, referring to the murder of Rizzio, mentions the Laird of Cawden (*sic*) as amongst those who were present at the murder, and then quaintly goes on to say: "Her husband (Queen Mary's) has disclosed all that he knew of any man. His dagger was left standing in Rizzio's body." But in a subsequent paper, entitled "Names of those consenting to the death of Davy" (how strangely the pet name sounds in a State paper!), the name of Cawden is omitted. But in August of the same year, a paper has the entry relating to the murderers of "Davy," "There is now come home and released from the horn Ormiston, Hanton, and Cawden."

Down to the troublous times of 1745, the lairds of Cawdor and Kilravock are to the fore wherever fighting is to be had.

To pass from the bed-chamber up through the stone walls out on to the tower is to pass from the dark, murderous night into the pleasant day. The view is very lovely, and stretches far away to Nairn, St. George, and Kilravock; and on the south side looks down on to the beautiful gardens bright with the square and circular plots of vivid blossom. Each little tourelle at the corner is perfect, and so also is the high roof, a peculiarity, but one that detracts from the picturesque appearance of the castle.

Not far from the castle stands the little church of Cawdor, square and whitewashed, the chancel built up, and the pulpit now takes its place. The service is a strangely simple one. All stand up for the prayers; and these being impromptu and very long, ere they are half over the congregation have lapsed from their upright and orderly position into every description of lounging possible, as



CAWDOR CASTLE.

From a Drawing by H. Whitley.

See "IN THE MACBETH COUNTRY."



the seats are low and not handy for leaning against. At the singing all sit, apparently much relieved at the opportunity; but the choir stand in a circle round the pulpit. One step in front of them. After it has been announced that they will sing the paraphrase "Ethelbeda," he solemnly waves his hand slowly up and down, and so the hymn is slowly and coldly gone through in monotonous cadence until the last verse, and then, with joy at the near finish, the hand moves quicker and the voices follow it promptly to the end.

The collection is made with boxes on very long sticks, which are held up to the earl in the gallery and the minister in the pulpit. The sermon was very long, and many of the sturdy, sunburnt, sandy congregation took advantage of it for a snooze. One point in it suitable to a population that lived beneath the shadow of a feudal castle was the likening of heaven to a "Banqueting Hall"—a simile these cotters would understand and appreciate.

Looking through the windows from the churchyard, one saw that the chancel is now used as the vestry, and in the place of the communion table stood the toilet table of the minister, with looking-glass and brush and comb.

It was curious to notice the constant recurrence of the same names on the tombstones. The Macphersons and Frasers seemed to possess half the ground, and most of the headstones had the same decorations of bell, skull and cross bones, coffin, spade and mattock and hour glass. At the north chancel door, still fixed to the round massive pillars, are the jongs, the now rarely met with instrument of punishment for the unvirtuous.

The one on the right-hand pillar is broken, but the one on the left is still complete and ready for the neck of any strayer from virtuous ways. We heard, after leaving Cawdor, that there is also still existing a "stool of ecclesiastical discipline," but this instrument of correction we unfortunately did not see.

From the churchyard of Cawdor a pleasant level road leads on to the house of Kilravock (pronounced Kilrock), and ere long the square tower is in sight; but the road turns away to the right over the bridge, and the lodge gates are entered but a little way beyond. A very long drive, with grand old beeches and ash trees, leads to the house. The building is of the same date as Cawdor, and is in the same style of architecture; but here the pendant tourelles at each corner of the square tower have no pointed roof; but there is the same high pointed roof above the centre of the main tower.

Kilravock Castle is interesting from its connection with the history of Cawdor, with which it is completely interwoven, and also for the fact that Duncan Forbes of '15 and '45 fame, married Mary Rose, the daughter of Hugh Rose of Kilravock. A little fact perhaps more interesting to many than the accounts of all power amongst the clans of the former Lairds of Kilravock, is pre-

served by one of the trees being christened "Burns' tree," in memory of Burns' visit to the castle.

After leaving Kilravoch, a path leads away past the stables, up through a road lined on either side with fine Scotch firs, and between luxuriant growth of bracken and heather;—an unfrequented path, the birds freely flitting over it, and the rabbits leaping across the road as the footfalls disturb them. Overhead the wind was gently sighing through the dark branches, and amidst the bracken were great fungi of the most brilliant hues. Many would have offered an excellent seat for mischievous Puck, and their sturdy stems would scarcely have bent to his weight.

At the end of this road were two high pillars and a few cottages, and away beyond a full view of the open firth, from which came up the cool sea breeze that had been musically wandering amongst the dark firs.

An inquiry at the cottages seemed to leave a doubt as to the whereabouts of the "Loch of the clans."

"Was it Loch Fleming?" was the inquiry; the Loch of the clans seemed scarcely known; but at last one old man seemed to know of this mysterious loch, and gave the route to be taken for it.

So on we passed beneath the trees, and with a constant fire of fairy artillery on either side of us from the dark broom, whose pods were bursting continually from the heat of the sun, the little black, hard seed balls being thrown some distance into the road after the sharp click of the mimic fire.

After leaving this road the way led across an open moor, black with heather, but with no path, and very rough walking; then across some cultivated fields to some little cottages on the slope of the hill; and here ought to have been the "Loch of the clans," but not a glimmer of water could be seen.

After a vain attempt to trace any sign of a lake, the shortest way out of the difficulty seemed to be to inquire at the little farm, and at last a door was found and a low room entered.

An old man was hurriedly pulling on his breeks on a bed; he had been having an afternoon's sleep, never expecting visitors. A woman was seated on a low seat over a smouldering peat fire, another bed was in the other corner, the timber roof was inky black with the smoke of the peat, and hung about in dark corners were the pots, kettles, pails, and pans of the house and farm. This appeared to be the only living room; but how many occupied the two beds we did not venture to inquire.

A good draught of milk and some bread was kindly offered and accepted gratefully, and then the old man came to point out the "Loch of the clans," that with some difficulty he had been made to understand was the cause of his rest being so disturbed.

We went out from the cottage and up a slope, and the old man pointed down to a field beneath and said "that was the loch."

"But where was the water?" we asked in astonishment.

"Oh, that was all gone long ago;" and on looking at the formation of the ground around, it was plain enough that a lake had been there.

The fields below were a low, flat plain, with rising sides all around; from the lowest level rose banks of rounded pebbles, that formed the shores of the lake, and above these sloped the rising ground crowned with a line of firs.

"But what about the pit dwellings?" The old man seemed to understand this, and pointed to the lower end of the dried lake some mile or so distant.

"Awa by yon wee bit housie, by yon treacks," said he, "there had been something there," but it was all gone now; it was just a round hole in the ground with stakes around them, and a cairn of stones, but now it was all filled in. A Dr. Somebody had been there and taken it all away.

And so this walk in search of a lake and pit dwellings ended in a dried-up lake and a distant sight of where some pit dwellings had been.

Whether the old man was wholly right, or whether the doctor had still left something of the pit dwellings to interest others after him, the distance, and the fact that this was the ending and not the beginning of a day's walk, prevented us from seeing.

How the lake became named the "Loch of the clans" was explained by the old man with the fact "that two clans got shooting at one another with bows and arrows."

The lake dwellings had been, we learnt, rifled to enrich the Nairn Museum, and the piles and various other items that were obtained from it may now be seen there. If they could have been left where they were and some watch placed over them, they would have been far more interesting to the curious and instructive to the learned.

Giving up the idea of an extra two or three miles' trudge over rough fields to see what appeared to be all destroyed, we followed our old man's half Gaelic, half English directions, and worked out again to the main road, past several other smaller dried lakes and what looked liked tumuli, and soon again reached Nairn, in time to stroll down the beach and see the sun set in gorgeous hues behind the hills of Cromarty; leaving still to be enjoyed in the Macbeth country the walks over Hardmuir, whereon the three witches disported themselves "in thunder, lightning or in rain," and the town of Forres, where King Macbeth, "after he for Banquo's issue had fil'd his mind, and gracious Duncan murdered," lived a little while, but to be "awearry of the sun, and wish th' estate o' the world were now undone."

JAMES BAKER.

OUR TREASURES.

"TIDD," I said, solemnly, "a thought strikes me."

"To swear eternal friendship? Better not, old man; we should quarrel before the week was out."

"Don't be frivolous. We're not playing 'Box and Cox.' This is serious. What do you say to taking a house?"

"A *what*?" shouted Tidd, as if I had suggested our taking a railway station.

"A house—a house of our own, where landladies would cease from troubling and the cold meat be at rest; have done, once for all, with these abominable furnished apartments. What say you?"

He didn't say anything, but looked at me in speechless amazement. The idea was too large for him to take in all at once. I saw that he would have to swallow it gradually, as the boa constrictor does his prey. I proceeded to lubricate it for him.

"Why shouldn't we? We've stood the inconveniences and the extortions of lodgings long enough. Why shouldn't we rent a house for ourselves? We can afford it; indeed, in the long run, I believe we should save money by it."

Tidd already looked a shade less astonished. I could see that he was beginning to like the idea; and before we parted we had agreed that it should become an accomplished fact. We *would* take a house. We shook hands upon it; and when Timperley Browne and Thomson Tidd shook hands upon a thing, it was as good as done.

Tidd and I are both bachelors; not *old* bachelors, by any means, but confirmed bachelors. Tidd is an architect, with a taste for music and dry sherry. I am a tea-broker, with an office in Mincing Lane. We had always lived in apartments; sometimes apart, but more often together. We had endured every possible variety of landlady, and every conceivable species of "cat," from the feline who *would* use my Rowland's Macassar and my favourite hair-brush, to the "tom" who borrowed my diamond shirt studs and smoked my best cigars. We had tried chambers in what is facetiously termed an Inn, but we found that Scylla the "laundress" was, if possible, worse than Charybdis the landlady. The last straw in that case, I remember, was finding Mrs. Glooge (her very name was an outrage on humanity) wearing my dress-boots. I tried a boarding-house for a short time, but I have

an unfortunate tendency to make myself agreeable, and among the boarders there was a widow, also with a tendency to make herself agreeable, and—— well, I won't go into details. Suffice it to say that I never had such a narrow escape in my life, and I'll take good care I never run such a risk again. No more boarding-houses for *me*. On the evening to which I have referred, Tidd and I had been exchanging confidences, and it was the exasperating nature of our latest experiences that drove us to the dread resolve I have recorded. It is proverbial that worms will turn under sufficient provocation, but it is not often that they turn, as in our case, into British householders.

I pass over the details of our house-hunting and house-furnishing. We were fortunate enough to secure a house in which the proprietor had himself resided, and which consequently possessed a variety of exceptional attractions: a conservatory, a bath-room, hot water laid on everywhere, and, last but not least, a peculiarly admirable kitchen range, somebody or other's patent, and known as the "Treasure." We engaged a cook, who was to do for us generally, and who was also warranted to be a treasure, and Tidd and I rejoiced in anticipation over the *recherché* little dinners which we should be able to give our bachelor friends, Toller of the Stock Exchange, and Tracy of the Probate Department. Hitherto such hospitalities had been exchanged at our respective clubs. Ours was the Megæra, and theirs was the Polypodium; and the Polypodium had, as a rule, rather the best of it. *Now*, we flattered ourselves, it would be all the other way.

"We'll make 'em turn green with envy, Tidd, my boy," I said one evening when we were talking over the matter. It wasn't a Christian way of looking at it. I feel that *now*, and I suppose what happened was what old ladies call a judgment; but I really don't think it deserved such an awful retribution. The furniture was in at last, the carpets were down, and the curtains were up (it wasn't quite so easy as it sounds, but it was done), and we came home at six o'clock one awful Wednesday to partake of our first dinner in our own house. We met on the doorstep, both in the best of spirits. Tidd was humming "*La donna è mobile*," and I had bought a new hat in honour of the occasion. We each produced a new latch-key, but Tidd got his out first, and had the honour of opening the door. We hung up our hats in our new hall, and thence proceeded to our new lavatory, where we washed our hands with much solemnity. We then took up our positions, one on each side of the fire, in our new drawing-room, and waited the announcement of dinner. We had arranged a tasty little *menu*, consisting of a pair of soles, a duck, and an apricot tart; and dinner was fixed for a quarter past six. There were just five minutes to wait. The five minutes passed, and another five after that, and another, and another, and yet dinner was not announced.

Tidd and I began to look at one another anxiously. "It won't do to hurry her," I said. "Of course she will hardly have got things into going order for the first day or two." Tidd admitted the justice of my remark, and we waited another twenty minutes or so. "I say, this is beyond a joke," said Tidd. "Hadn't we better go into the dining-room. Perhaps she has served dinner, and is waiting for us."

We moved to the dining-room accordingly. The cloth was laid in the first style of art; but there was no further sign of dinner, and after waiting another ten minutes I timidly rang the bell. It produced no result, and Tidd and I began to look at each other in dismay.

"Perhaps Trotter" (our new cook) "is taken ill," suggested Tidd. "Hadn't you better go down and see?"

"Hadn't *you* better go down and see," I retorted. "You don't suppose I'm going to beard a cook in her own kitchen."

"It was you who suggested taking the house," said Tidd, viciously.

I looked at him more in sorrow than in anger.

"Tidd," I said with emotion, "shall the friendship of years be imperilled by the unpunctuality of a menial at sixteen pounds a year? Never! Let us have one glass of this old Madeira, and then we will toss which of us shall go down and beard her in her den."

Tidd grasped my hand, and the rupture was averted. We had a glass of the Madeira (two glasses, to be strictly accurate), and then, with the solemnity befitting the occasion, Tidd threw up a copper. "Woman," I said at a venture. But with the uncertainty proverbially affected by the sex, woman was undermost; and I had to undertake the dreaded pilgrimage to the lower regions. I advanced cautiously to the kitchen stairs, and called timidly over the balusters, "Trotter!" There was no direct answer, but I heard a confused murmur below, like somebody crying and swearing at the same time. I have heard people weep, and I have heard people swear, but never till now the two together; and I began to fear that our faithful Trotter must be very unwell indeed. I groped my way down the stairs, and broke my shins over a pail at the bottom. As soon as the pain had subsided a little, I opened the door of the kitchen, and found our two-legged treasure in tears, with a huge smut on her nose and one side of her hair down, apostrophizing our other treasure, the wonderful stove, in language which she certainly never learnt at a Sunday School.

"What is the matter, Trotter?" I said mildly, "and why have you not served dinner?"

"'Cause it ain't cooked," was the reply, "and never likely to be, with this bloomin' old tater-can of a stove. There's your ducks, and there's your soles, and there's your apercot tart, and I hope you like 'em!" As she spoke she pulled out each article and

thrust it under my nose. They were admirably arranged for cooking, but had no appearance of having ever been near a fire.

"Possibly," I suggested, "Trotter, you don't quite understand the stove."

"Maybe not, and I don't want to," retorted our infuriated domestic. "If you think *you* can do better, you're welcome to try. I've had my whack! I'd sell the dratted thing for old iron, if I had *my* way."

"Trotter," I said, with all the dignity that I could command, "this is a very expensive stove, a most expensive stove" (I didn't know whether it was or not, but I felt it was wise to say so), "and is warranted to cook a dinner for fifteen persons. My landlord told me so, and he is a most respectable man."

"Then the landlord had better come and cook the dinner himself," retorted Trotter.

I took no notice of the interruption. "You have probably been accustomed to the old-fashioned open ranges, Trotter, and of course you can't be expected to understand off-hand all the ins and outs of a high-class affair like this. So don't distress yourself; but put on your bonnet (you had better wash your face first, by the way), and fetch a pound of ham and beef from the cookshop round the corner. Mr. Tidd and I will make shift with that for this one evening; and to-morrow I will get Mr. Jawker to come and explain matters to us, and then you will get on like a house on fire."

"You ain't likely to have any house on fire with *that* stove," replied Trotter, shaking her head at it maliciously, as though that summed up the measure of its iniquities. But my calmness had its effect upon her, and about eight o'clock Tidd and I sat down, in place of the luxurious banquet we had anticipated, to a plate of ham and beef from the cook-shop. Trotter was with difficulty dissuaded from packing up her boxes and departing at once, but finally agreed to wait the result of the visit of our landlord, to whom I sent a pressing letter the same evening.

The next morning Mr. Jawker arrived. He was a little man with a big head, and a figure which was presumptive evidence of the satisfactory performance of the kitchen-range wherever *he* resided, and I began to be more hopeful. He carried under his arm an oblong parcel, done up in brown paper. He approached the matter in hand with a cheery confidence, and a certainty of being able to put things right in ten minutes or so, which would have been a fortune to a medical man.

"A little difficulty with the Treasure, eh?" he said, carefully depositing his hat on the dresser, and beaming affectionately on the stove through his spectacles. "Ah well, we'll soon set *that* right. Finest range in London! I've brought you the dripping-pan."

"The what?" I inquired. I had heard of dripping-pans, but I hadn't the faintest idea what they were. Tidd, arrayed in a flowery dressing-gown and a magnificently embroidered smoking-cap, tried to look as if *he* knew, but it was a failure. Meanwhile Mr. Jawker had begun to untie his parcel.

"The dripping-pan! why, of course, the tin affair that you put under the meat. Sarah here"—("which *my* name is Mary Hann," haughtily interjected Trotter)—"knows all about it; but this dripping-pan is a patent, made specially to go with the Treasure. It's a size too large for our present range, so I don't mind making you a present of it. Look here, dodgy arrangement underneath to hold water. *Without* water, and ventilator shut, oven only *bakes*. *With* water, and ventilator open, oven *roasts*. Joint done to a turn, delicious brown, gravy in it, beautiful!" And Mr. Jawker smacked his lips lovingly at the recollection. "Finest stove in London, I assure you. Only wish I'd got it in my new diggings. The range there isn't a patch upon this one."

"No doubt the stove is an excellent one, Mr. Jawker," I replied. "But we can't get it to cook at all."

"Not—cook—at—all!" ejaculated Mr. Jawker. "The Treasure range not cook! Why—it'd cook—it'd cook—your grandmother."

"I have no desire to put it to that test," I replied, with dignity. "I shall be quite content if it will cook a leg of mutton. But it won't even burn."

"Not burn! The Treasure range not burn! Come, that's a good one. Give me a handful of wood and some coals, and we'll soon see if it won't burn."

The coals and wood were produced, and Mr. Jawker, turning back his shirt cuffs, proceeded to lay and light the fire. I don't profess to understand that sort of thing myself, but it struck me that Mr. Jawker was not particularly expert, and I caught Trotter's eye resting upon him with a gaze of malignant satisfaction. I said to myself, "*That fire won't burn*," and it didn't. It smoked like a miniature volcano, but burn it wouldn't.

I really felt for Jawker. He poked and he prodded; he opened first one valve and then another; then shut them, and finally knelt in front of the fire and blew till the smuts fell "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa" over his face and shirt-front, and he looked like one of those black and white dogs that run after carriages; but all without avail. Tidd, with his hands in his dressing-gown pockets, began unconsciously to whistle "Cease, rude Boreas," but suddenly remembering himself, tried to change it into "*La donna è mobile*," with scarcely satisfactory effect. I caught his eye, and I saw that he had come to the same conclusion as myself, viz., that Jawker didn't know a bit more how to make the stove burn than we did. But he was far too artful to say so.

"Wants cleaning," he said, as he got up and dusted the knees

of his trousers with his pocket handkerchief. "Flue's choked with soot, that's what's the matter. I tell you what, I'll send you my builder, Bigsby. *He* knows all about the Treasure; he's repaired it lots of times; I'll tell him to come and clean it thoroughly, and just start it for you. Everything depends on a good start. When you've once made a start, you'll be all right, depend upon it." Whereupon he made a start himself, and departed.

Tidd and I dined out that day. Trotter made shift, I believe, to fry some eggs and bacon in the back kitchen, which fortunately did not possess a high-class range.

The next day the builder arrived; a cautious man, who wouldn't commit himself to anything. To our various suggestions as to the cause of the non-success of the stove he merely replied that he shouldn't wonder, but he "knowed it was a rare good stove." He accordingly took it carefully to pieces, and subsequently put it carefully together again, extracting in the process (and distributing about the premises) soot enough, as it appeared to me, to load a barge. His only remark during the process, intended apparently to be consolatory, was that soot was "rare good stuff for killin' earywigs." On my putting it to him where on earth we were to get earwigs enough to consume all that soot, he scratched his head, and candidly confessed that he didn't know. Having completed the demolition and reconstruction of the stove, he smiled (a premature smile), and having laid the fire, proceeded to light it. That is to say, he lighted the paper and the wood, but there the matter ended; the coals might have been cabbages, for any inflammability they appeared to possess. Our Treasure persistently declined to be wooed from its chaste coldness. It did not smoke quite so much as before, but so far as heat was concerned (I don't say dirt), you might have sat upon it without inconvenience. The builder went through the same performance of opening and shutting valves that Mr. Jawker had done, but with the same result, or rather absence of result, and finally suggested that there must be something "bust inside," and that "the man as made it" had better come and look at it.

We reported the result to Mr. Jawker, and again Tidd and I dined out (a cut off the joint at an eating-house). Mr. Jawker promised to send the maker of the Treasure, and after the lapse of a day or two he came. Like his predecessors, he bore emphatic testimony to the high character of the range, and added that if it didn't give satisfaction it was probably because our cook didn't understand how to manage it, which remark so incensed Trotter that I had to lock her in the scullery till he was gone. On examination, however, he said that the range was seriously out of repair, and among other things that we had (with the best of intentions, I am sure) knocked a hole through between the fire-box and the main flue, and thereby destroyed the whole draught of the apparatus. He estimated that the Treasure could be put in order

for a matter of four or five pounds ; but even then, he added (with a glance at the scullery) that it would want somebody with a head on their shoulders to handle it, and that where there wasn't a missus in the family (with a glance at me) the best of ranges didn't have a fair chance.

I told him I would think it over (meaning the repairs), and let him know. I talked the matter over with Tidd, and as the result of our deliberations I sent Mr. Jawker a letter, accompanied by way of postscript by a few touching lines, entitled "An Ode to a Treasure." They ran as follows :

" It will not burn, it will not cook,
Of stoves it is a sinner ;
So Tidd and I both vainly look
For anything like dinner.
Oh, help us, pray, without delay,
By some remedial measure ;
Or by-and-by we surely die,
All owing to our Treasure."

That fetched him. I thought it would. He said rather than have any more of my poetry he'd go halves with us in a new range. I told him I'd just as soon he paid for the whole ; but he said he wouldn't be outdone by me in generosity. He'd stick to "halves." Accordingly, on the advice of Trotter, I arranged to have one of the good old-fashioned open ranges, with "no nonsense about it." The cautious Bigsby came with two or three attendant sprites, and after a week or thereabouts of general upset, and a pervading atmosphere of grit throughout our mansion, the new range was fixed, and Bigsby, with business-like promptitude, sent us in his bill for our half, amounting to three pounds ten. Again a pleasing vista of nice little dinners loomed rosy before us, and we paid his demand without a murmur. We had bivouacked during the week where we could, "anywhere, anywhere, out of the grit," as I pathetically observed to Tidd, but now, we fondly hoped, our troubles were over, and again we came home to dinner full of joyful anticipation. We had ordered ox-tail soup, a leg of lamb with green peas and cauliflower, and a dish of macaroni cheese. I cannot say that the dinner was a complete success. The soup would have been very nice if it hadn't been quite so salt, and I have no doubt that the lamb would have been very nice also if it hadn't been quite so underdone, but I think three slugs in one cauliflower are more than a fair average. We might have made shift with the peas, but they were so hard that we were obliged to swallow them whole like pills, and after "taking" a dozen or two in this manner, we found the operation too tedious, and abandoned the attempt. Tidd ventured on a joke about "*pease de résistance*." It was a gallant attempt, and I tried to smile ; but the effort was too great, and I very nearly burst into tears instead. We ultimately dined off the macaroni cheese. We both agreed,

when Trotter was out of the room, that something ought to be said to her, but we could not agree as to who should say it, and there was a something in her eye which indicated that criticism would not be well received. Ultimately we decided to say nothing at all just at present, encouraging each other by the reflection that the new stove might not have got properly aired, or that there might be some other sufficient reason for her failure, and that it mightn't occur again. The next day things were a trifle better; the next they were not quite so well, and thus the fortunes of our dinners fluctuated, till about a week after the inauguration of the new range, on our returning home as usual at six o'clock, we found no cloth laid in the dining-room, nor was there any sound of any one moving below. Pursuing our researches, with caution, down to the kitchen, we found the fire out and no signs either of dinner or of Trotter. Finally hearing a subdued sound of lamentation, we traced it to the larder, and there found our inestimable Trotter sitting on the floor, with one arm embracing the bread-pan, and weeping freely. On endeavouring to ascertain the cause of her grief, we could only elicit that she was "a pore orphan, and everybody was agin her." As she had told me, on applying for the situation, that she had lost both her parents at the age of five, her orphaned condition seemed hardly an adequate explanation for her present grief. I found, on subsequent examination, that I had left the side-board open, and that the gin-bottle (filled the previous morning) was empty; but Trotter assured us, with such floods of tears and so many pious ejaculations, that she hadn't tasted anything stronger than cough-mixture the whole blessed day, that we really didn't like to contradict her. However, this last straw, I won't say "broke the camels' backs," but decided the camels that they wouldn't allow their backs to be broken. We paid Trotter a month's wages the next morning, and sent her packing, and did not discover till some days after that she had taken a selection of our new silver spoons to remember us by.

We advertised at once for a new servant, and meantime endured an interregnum of charwoman, taking it by turns to get up in the morning and let her in, and picking up our meals, like the sparrows, when and where we could. What we have undergone in consequence of our advertisement, nobody knows. We had advertised for a respectable woman between thirty and forty, but the majority of those who applied were either pert damsels of seventeen or thereabouts (one of them poked me in the ribs, and addressed me as "uncle"), or elderly ladies ranging from sixty upwards. The lame, the halt, and the blind (or nearly) presented themselves. As to "respectable," I don't wish to be libellous, so perhaps the less said the better. At last, however, a young woman has presented herself, who seems to answer our requirements. She

wears her hair in what is vulgarly termed a "bang," and only claims to be eight-and-twenty "all told," but she comes of a highly respectable family (being second cousin to our buttermilk's first wife), and her character is all that could be desired. Indeed, her late mistress gave such a glowing account of her that my only wonder was how she could ever bring herself to part with her. She concluded by saying that *Jemima* would be a Treasure to us. The associations of the word were so painful, that I felt half inclined to say in that case I wouldn't trouble her, but I reflected on the long array of juvenile and elderly incapables who had passed in review before me, and I thought better of it. She is coming to-morrow.

* * * * *

She has come. She has just arrived, and has taken a survey of her dominions. Her first words on entering the kitchen were, "Lor, if you ain't got one o' them nasty old-fashioned open ranges; which *I've* always been accustomed to a kitchen. I'm sure I shan't be able to cook with that old thing."

I have no doubt she is right. I have an awful presentiment that she will *not* be able to cook, but whose the fault, whether that of the cook or the cooking apparatus, who is to decide? There is only one thing to be done. It is a sad termination to the friendship of years, but there is no help for it. Either Tidd or I must get married, and I'll take my davy *I* won't.

Poor Tidd!

ANGELO J. LEWIS.

FLESWICK BAY: A LEGEND OF WEST CUMBERLAND.

Who knows not the fame of St. Bega's shrine?
No fairer coast than the cliffs which shine
O'er the Priory Temple there,
Which many a saint to this earth hath given,
Since that Ulster maid from her father driven
Planted her memory here.

'Tis said that one morsel of Irish turf
Wafted her form through the boisterous surf
To Cumbria's friendly shore;
That she vowed in a storm, if the faithful sod
Bore her safe to land, a rich fane to God
Should yield blessings evermore.

But it is not so generally known as it ought,
That as that child of the faith was brought
From her parent's tyranny,
A waiting troop of sea-fairies good
Floated beside through the surging flood
To keep her pure company.

* * * * *

A whitestone beacon doth overspread
Its flame on the foreland of St. Bees' Head;
There down the bluff's meadowy side,
Some two mile or more from that abbey grey,
With its snug round caves lies a sheltered bay
Oft washed by the rising tide.

Right pleasant it is on a sunshiny day
 On the pebbled slopes of that beach to stray ;
 There you dream there must appear
 Old Proteus' herd of fat calves to feed,
 Or that the old man is asleep indeed
 In one of the hollows near.

No marvel that bevy of mermaids fair,
 Who, when Bega left Erin, escorted her
 Here chose to linger and rove ;
 For being more used to the open, you see,
 They'd not be at home in a nunnery,
 So they took to this Fleswick cove.

And they gambolled here in the sparkling tide,
 Or loved in those arching caves to hide
 For many a century ;
 And the abbey rose and the nunnery too,
 And crops still flourished and blessings grew
 From that good saint's piety.

* * * * *

'Twas in seventeen-hundred-and-seventy-nine,
 Th' American craft 'gan to undermine
 Our struggling British trade ;
 And that rover bold John Paul Jones yclept,
 This selfsame coast with his vessels swept,
 And dreadful havoc he made.

He burnt the ships of Whitehaven port
 ('Twas not guarded then by an airy fort) ;
 A shame it is to tell
 How they blazed away, and no end of pelf
 Made their own by force, though this Jones himself
 Was a Britisher-born as well.

Yes, they blazed away those ruffians hired,
Till some of the dark-haired crew got tired,
And thus one was heard to say :
“I’m sick,” quoth he, “of this heavy fun,
And should like a mild change—to some creek we’ll run,
And let old Jones fire away !”

So to Fleswick straight in a boat they draw,
And plant a keg of old usquebaugh,
Then on to the shore they creep ;
And they quaffed and roared in the glowing sun
Of this stranger-land and the tricks they had done,
Till each rascal was lost in sleep.

As they snoring lay in a distant cave,
Lo ! those happy fairies rose out of the wave
For their innocent delight :
How softly they dressed their winsome locks,
And played “hide-and-seek” on the slippery rocks
(In truth a rare pretty sight) !

Which one of the sailors, now just awake,
All wondering spied, then thickly he spake :
“Up, mates ! why slumber there ?
Here’s a jovial game, some rare English gells,
Blow me, if they ain’t real *tiptop* swells,
A-combing their golden hair !”

Up rose that drunken party and ran
To seize the fair prey—helter-skelter each man,
But (see Heaven’s avenging power !)
Amid bellowing thunder some monster-sprite
Their rough hands withheld and each brain did smite,
That down in the sand they cower !

Thus phrensy-stricken the lawless band
 At length stumbled up the mountain land,
 Toward that ancient Priory;
 But the demon vengeance pursued them still
 Till they sunk in some deeps * of the yawning hill,
 Where their bones you now may see.

'Tis pleasant, I said, when the sunbeams pour,
 To wander or bask on that Fleswick shore;
 But the gentle fairy train
 Is no longer there, for affrighted they
 With the dead men's language no more would stay
 To sport by the spangled main.

At least not be seen. Though the drops, 'tis said,
 Of sweet water that trickle overhead
 In those caves are the maidens' tears;
 And oft when the evening's ruddy glow
 Lights the west, there are echoed from far below
 (Or so the coastguard hears)

From the dark-green shelves to the cliffs aloft,
 Strange notes of a dirge ringing wild and soft,
 A heart-moving melody:
 Nay perchance if you dare remain all night,
 Of those fairies still you might catch a sight—
 But none has been known to try!

JOSEPH B. DALTON.

* The so-called "Patern" or "Paten" holes.

T S



"The prompt graph, and the poet's lore
Still sing the tale of Seasons as they roll;
For me, when I forget the durling theme,
Whether the Blossom blows, the Summer ray
Tosses the plain, inspiring Autumn gleams,
Or Winter rises in the blackening East,
Be my tongue mute — my fancy faint no more,
And, dead to joy, forget my heart to beat!"

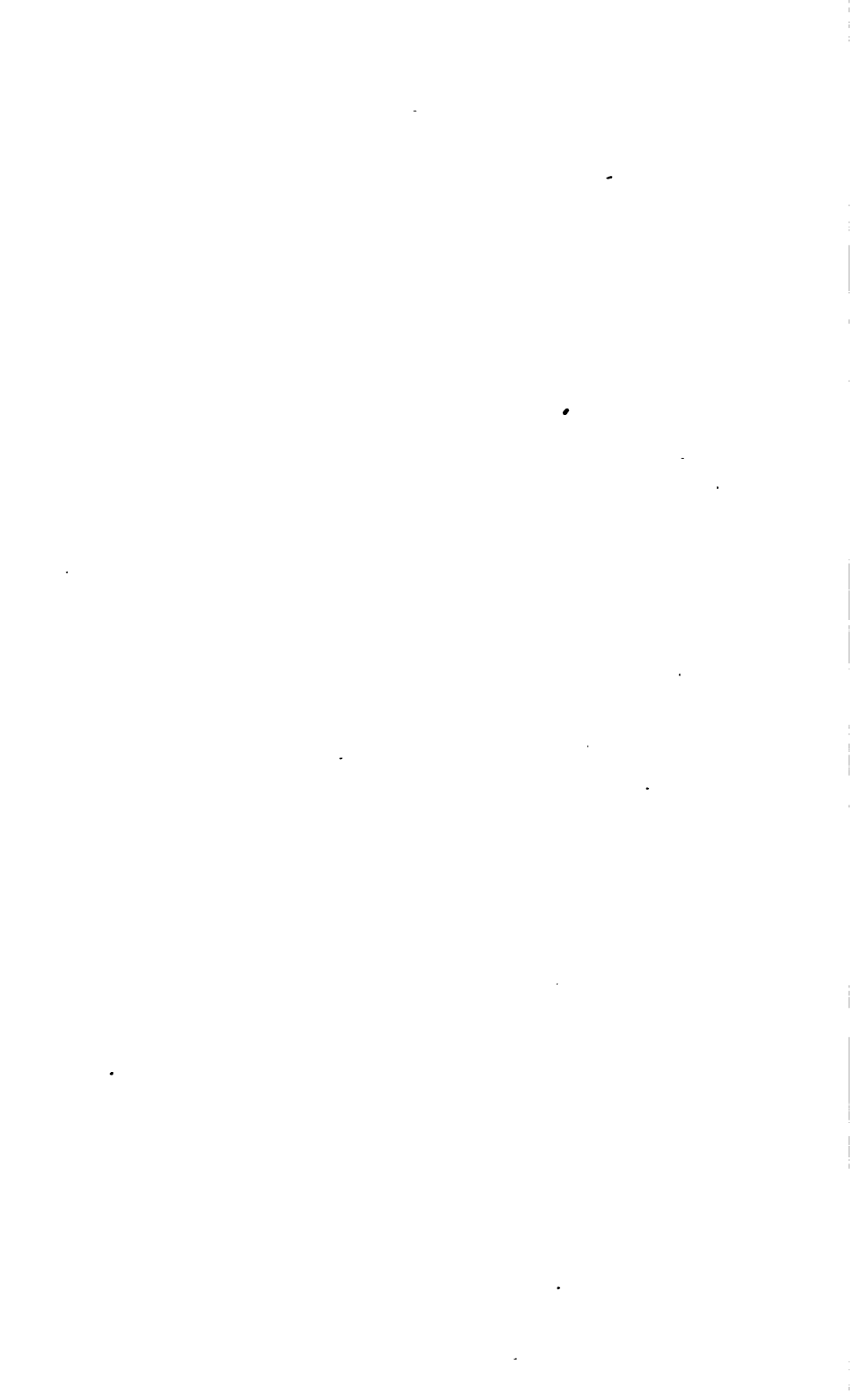


W. L. Taylor

I cannot go
Where Universal Love not smiles around,
Sustaining all yon orbes and all their Suns;
From seeming evil still coming good,
And better thence again, and better still,
In infinite progression. But I lose
Myself in Him, in light ineffable!
Come then, Expressive silence, nurse His praise!"

Thomson's "Hymn to the Seasons."





A RAMBLE ON THE NORTH COAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TO CROMER FOR A HOLIDAY."

IT is not often that the aspirations of a concluding holiday season find their realization in the opening weeks of the next; but such was the writer's happy fate last year. Once more I found myself at my favourite Cromer, and after a peep at "the Broads" at Wroxham, *en passant*, which I meant to "do" on the return journey, I step out on the platform perched on the elevated plateau which dominates the little town and the furzy downs of the lighthouse hill. It is July, and only the very first flight of holiday seekers have made their way down here, so the crush is not great at the station, and porters are available and fairly civil. Like a prudent paterfamilias, I had secured my lodgings of the previous summer as the centre of my perambulations along the coast on both sides, with its clean and comely landlady and her excellent cooking, which she had picked up in a neighbouring well-known boarding-house, to say nothing of her wonderful punctuality. But, among other attractions, she is the wife of that good-looking and courteous skipper of the "Princess Louise," which every visitor patronizes for one morning at least during his *séjour* at Cromer, so that with other good things we secure a critical diagnosis of the weather, information as to the tides, the best and freshest of fish, the regular "Yarmouth bloater" and Cromer lobster.

In my innocence I had ordered some of the latter for our "high tea," but on our arrival found to our dismay that July was a "close" month, and lobsters were not in season. But during this interval between my two visits there were signs of improvement at Cromer. The road from the station had been widened, and a footway or *trottoir* had been made, and a few seats had been erected, so that a feeling of safety, not to say repose, was generated, the streets, narrow, tortuous, and converging to the Church Square not being so safe as London streets with its police and "refuges," and the collisions being frequent. We were pleased to notice villas were springing up in many directions on the Bond-Cabbell estate, so there will be a chance of getting a house even in August to oneself. Besides, the grand old church, with its noble tower, was encased in scaffolding, which told of restoration, polishing up of the flint work, and rebuilding of its noble chancel. So Cromer is moving with the times like other places.

Apropos of the chancel, I think I have found the true version of the history of its destruction. Oliver Cromwell's iconoclastic proclivities must be credited with it after all. I came to my certitude in the matter in this wise. One sultry morning a party of us were in the "Princess Louise," lying off Cromer, and there wasn't a breath of air to fill the sails. The boat scarcely moved on the deep blue waters, which were so clear that you could almost see the ruins of the old church on the church rock. In vain did the sailor who managed the sails whistle for a breeze; for a moment we seemed to get into a tidal wave of wind-propelling power, but it was soon over, not even a fitful gust came to cheer us up. The passengers had read their papers, the ladies were tired of their novels. A little boy who dropped his spade over the boat produced a languid sort of excitement. There was not even the diversion of any one suffering from *mal-de-mer*. Everybody seemed half-asleep, as Ovid somewhere says :

"Volucresque canoræ
Fecerunt somnos, et leve murmur aquæ."

The fine old sexagenarian skipper at the helm, however, seemed a jolly, garrulous sort of man, so the writer thought this a good opportunity of pumping him and sucking his brains.

"I suppose you know Cromer well?"

"Know it, sir? Lor, knew it when there were very few houses there, and none of them fine willas had been erected."

"Known it all your life?"

"Why, sir, I am a Cromer man, bred and born there."

"A good old-seasoned Cromer lobster," I mildly suggested.

"That's right," replied he, using a favourite Norfolk phrase.

And he *was* a man, that fine old Cromer sailor—a veritable Dane; such an open, bronzed, red face, a fine head, and merry twinkling eye; but that broad chest, and arms and legs, and thews and sinews, where could such a sturdy mariner have been reared except on the coast of Norfolk?

"Perhaps you wouldn't guess my age, sir? I'm nearer seventy than sixty; and my old woman, she be, as they say, on the shady side of sixty; but we be both as strong as ever. Lor, sir, us thought as how we should like to go to London, me and my old woman, and see what these fine people call the 'Ventories.' So I says, 'Jane, my dear, we have never been beyond Norwich, and I should like to take ye to London—where these fine folks come from every summer, looking so pale and washed-out like, with their little ones with their spades and buckets, digging up all manner of shapes on these sands. They say it is as big, if not bigger, than Cromer and Norwich put together. Let's go; we may never have such a chance again.' 'Right you are,' said Jane, 'let us go, Abel'" (Abel seems a favourite name with the Norfolk men), "and we agreed to go. Well, sir, we took our

excursion tickets, and all went well till we got on the journey beyond Norwich; but the people who got in the carriage after that began to *insult* us, me and my missus; they did sir, 'pon honour. What do you say to that?"

"Not a bit of it," I replied, "passengers nowadays are very polite to one another, especially to those who come out of the provinces."

"Provinces, you say; it was when we got into them 'shires,' I tell you, they began to insult us."

The East Anglians are very suspicious of all who come out of the *shires* in England, more so formerly than now.

"No, my friend," I suggested, "they didn't insult you or mean to insult you. They only 'chaffed' you in a good-tempered way, finding you were country people going to town. They didn't mean anything, only pleasant 'chaff.' Can't you 'chaffer'?"

"Anything but pleasant, sir, I can assure you. It riled me and it made us very uncomfortable, and we both felt we were being insulted, and in public too—that was the sting. Us didn't like that. My old missus got very red in the face, and she looked waspish in the eyes and bellicose about the gills, kicking me under the seat, like a Jezebel stirring up Ahab to fight. But I am not a fighting character, and we were out on the 'sprees,' so though Jane looked more like Jezebel every minute, I put my feelings like two Norfolk dumplings into my cheeks, and folded my arms and tried to pass it off; but it wasn't pleasant, I assure you. It was a regular scorcher once or twice."

"My dear man," I replied, "it was only chaffer or banter, I assure you. Though I wasn't there to hear it, I'm sure it was."

"Well, whatever it was we didn't like it, and missus never talks of it without getting very red and uncomfortable like."

East Anglians can't take a joke or bear the mildest chaff; they put on an injured look, and seem as if insulted. Chaff won't pay with these folk—they are too prosaic and matter-of-fact for *that*.

All this was told in an inimitable manner, as only a broad Norfolk could tell it, which fairly convulsed the passengers, and was provocative of no little merriment. Finding the skipper in this garrulous strain, I proceeded to ask him how he liked the metropolis, and what struck him most when he got to London. Full of good humour he proceeded:

"Well, I thought Norwich a biggish place, but London—lor, sir, there seemed no end to the houses and streets and squares; in fact, they seem all to be running into each other but never coming to an end, and the horses and carriages and that like, it appeared as if all the shires had sent up all their cattle. The crowd of people, too, was so great that I said to my missus, 'Jane, my dear, let's draw on one side, and let the ladies and gentlemen go by.' We did for a time, but the crowds got bigger every minute. And then the railways. We thought it

a grand thing when the railway came to Cromer the other day, but there in London they go underground as well as above-ground. We went to the exhibition that way, but never shall I forget all I saw there—the crowds, the ladies' dresses, the fountains, and the other fine things; it looked more like a dream, and us had to pinch ourselves to be sure we were not dreaming. But of all the wonderful things I saw in town, as they call it, was this. Well, you know the Church Square at Cromer, it was a street wider than that, but where it was I doan't know. Missus and me were walking along arm-and-arm, when all of a sudden we looked up and saw a man, a soldier sitting on a horse, and he never moved, and his horse never moved. We stared up at him and not a muscle in his face changed; nor did his horse's tail switch about. We stared at him some five minutes and he never stirred, then we went the other side and looked and looked again, but no movement. Whether they were alive or statues I couldn't tell. Then I went right in front and tried to catch his eye; I wanted to say to that soldier, 'Sir, I has your eye,' but never a twinkle did I see one; I became quite frightened, when Jane suddenly pulled me by the arm and said, 'Abel, just look there, here's another gentleman on his horse just alike, and he doesn't move neither, it must be his brother; but what are they, living or dead?' By this time the crowd was all round us and looking at we, so us felt very ashamed, and I said to Jane, 'We had better move on.'

The dear old souls had been standing all that time in front of the Horse Guards.

"But you've forgotten all about the chancel at Cromer church," I said; "I want to know who destroyed it."

"Now didn't I tell ye it was Oliver as did it."

"Then prove it," said I, for one passenger suggested it might have been Richard Cromwell, as many of his iconoclastic delinquencies are put down to the Protector.

"You see, sir, I am getting near seventy years. My missus is over threescore, my fayther died in his hundredth, and mother was fourscore and four" (the way an East Anglican pronounces *four* baffles all description, and I'll give it up); "their father and mother were over fourscore, it may be four or five" (the letter *f* in all these words did not come trippingly from the tongue, but with a jerk as if a tooth had been wrenched out or an inchoate swallow had paralyzed the uvula) "and you see these two or three generations make up a sight of years. How many do you want?"

"Make out, say, two hundred and forty years."

"Oh! that is easily done. I'm no schollard, as there was no schools in my days, but if you put my age on to fayther's and grandfayther's I guess you won't be far wrong. Anyway my family has lived in Cromer for generations, and you know people live long in Norfolk."

"Yes," I replied, "the burial registers give an average of from eighty-five to ninety years I notice; and Dickens says, somewhere in one of his novels, that if a man has a grudge against an insurance office, the best thing to do would be to buy an annuity and go and live at Yarmouth."

"So it would be at Cromer just as well; it is the healthiest place on the coast, with its fine sands, stretch of sea, and cliffs, and we are a long-lived family. So you see my father told me that it was Oliver Cromwell and his soldiers destroyed the old chancel, and acres of it, and my grandfather told my father, and his father again told him, and so on—the same story, only backwards like. I've heerd tell of it over and over again, handed on, you know, from generation to generation, what they calls a tradition, I believe, so you see that's how I know it."

"Good reasoning," I said, "my man, *q.e.d.*, it is proved; the lay impropiator of the great tithes gets off scot free for ever."

Cromer is rapidly filling at this time, and there is not a safer measure of the increase than the congregations at the fine old parish church from Sunday to Sunday. The day of rest is ushered in by the church clock in the fine old flint tower, common to this part of Norfolk, chiming eight o'clock, accompanied, as a sort of *arrière pensée*, by a few bars of Spohr's, "As pants the hart," &c., but on Monday morning all is life again. They are getting out the early bathing machines, which have been drawn up in a field some miles out of the town during the winter months, safe from the howling storms and boiling surf which beats on the shore. Away up at the coastguard station the officials of the Trinity Board are surveying miles and miles of purple and waveless sea with their eternal telescopes. The market women are trooping in with the ducks and chickens, green peas and kidney beans, currants, cherries, and greengages. At Cromer the early risers are returning from their morning tub—some patronizing Miller's or Jarvis' machines, after undergoing a mild species of competition, each saying, "Think I had the pleasure of bathing you last season, sor; nice to see old faces again," a kind of dubious compliment it must be owned. After breakfast there is a rush to the post office, where the polite postmaster is selling the day's papers as fast as he can; letters are being handed in, and telegrams sent out. Announcements are lying about to the effect that the Rev. —, from the Tabernacle in the East End, will address a lawn meeting in Lady B.'s grounds this afternoon at four o'clock—whom the beachmen call a "beautiful man 'to preach'"—and a subscription list lies open on the counter to augment the good vicar's miserable pittance of some hundred pounds, called by a sort of grim satire a living. But there is a universal scampering to the yellow sands and the charming beach, a noise of many happy voices, a clattering of little pails and spades, and a suspicious look of various bathing costumes on the part of *les dames*.

But having had our morning plunge in the briny, and now threading through the happy throng of children and all sorts and conditions of men and women, we must away over the hills and far away for our matutinal spin. Over the springy turf and velvety heath we pass the hill, with its white flashing lighthouse, look round, and see this little queen of Norfolk watering-places at her very best, shimmering in the morning sheen, and environed with a belt of the bluest water, out of which the jetty stands translucently bright. Cromer is seen to perfection at this time of the morning. Look away inland to the fields that slope towards the distant hills. On a small green platform, crowning a field of waving barley, stands the windmill seen for miles around, the most picturesque feature in this sunny landscape, and as yet whirling round in its old-fashioned way, regardless of the counter advantages of machinery or steam. But the good old miller has had no cause to regret the opening of the season, for it is not a hot summer like the last, and the wind has been high, fitful, and full of motive power. Then there was not a cloud to be seen, and the sky was azure blue for weeks. Now dark rain-clouds have drifted from sea to hill, scattering spray or rain-dust rather than rain. Sometimes a cloud of deep indigo colour has come from the north-west—the prevailing wind in this county, not east as some suppose—and emptied its refreshing contents on the parched fields, making but little impression on this thirsty soil. All through this summer, sun or no sun, there has been a bright brisk breeze, bending down the apple trees in the orchards, bowing down the golden corn in the fields, and sending the light fleecy clouds scudding away over the windmill top “far over hill and dale.” In all directions, as far as the eye can see, beyond Overstrand and Sidestrand, “fair waves the golden corn,” and the summer’s wind plays with the undertone of an æolian harp in the standing crops, “making lyric melody in their golden pinnacles” as it sweeps along. The young farmer is coming out from the neighbouring farmstead with his gun, walking by the hedgeside up to the ferny plantation among the yellow gorse, to see if he can bag a rabbit and help stock the larder at home. Next, Michaelmas geese are gobbling on the common hard by, keeping a respectful distance from a family of young turkeys growing up for next Christmas dinner (and Norfolk turkeys are proverbially good), and paying no attention to the browsing cattle, who claim the privilege of picking up their breakfast between the same hedges. The scene is “tooral rural.”

We are still close to the coast, only some two or three hundred yards away on the cliffs, fringed with heather and corn-fields, picked out with the everlasting red poppies. There is a tortuous path down to the beach, which is studded right and left with tents in lieu of machines. Norfolk people are very civil, and the Norfolk sailor particularly so. From the lofty brow of

the cliff you can see a vast expanse of purple sea, covered with herring boats starting for their annual voyage for the North Sea, and manned by the strapping fellows who belong to this village, whose wives won't see them till the day before Christmas-day. There was a service for these fishermen last Sunday evening at the little new church, built in the old graveyard with its picturesque ruins of the old church covered with ivy, and chancel, where lie the remains of the celebrated Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, Bart., of North Repps Hall, so well known for his exertions to extinguish African slavery and for his fine manly English character. How they *did* sing those hymns "for those at sea" with their deep stentorian voices—perhaps the last service some will ever attend, for these voyages are fraught with great risk and danger. They have to run into the nearest harbour, during the winter storms, on the Scotch coast sometimes, and in the various ports they sell their herrings by the "last," *i.e.*, so much for 10,000 fishes. They "must work" hard then, and the poor wives who get their house-money from the Cromer agent every Saturday often "must weep." Off they go in shoals at this time of the year, and turn their backs on the harvest fields. Indeed, Jack on shore, if not a dull, is a lazy fellow. You never see him doing anything except a little mild gardening, and he is the last person a farmer falls back upon. There you see him lolling under a hedge smoking innumerable pipes, or stretched out on the green-sward at the very cliff's edge, gazing, ever gazing, on ocean, with its "many twinkling laugh." The sight of that boundless sea seems to exercise a potential and perpetual fascination over him. He never gets tired of staring at it, lost in a kind of chronic reverie. What means that far-away look of his—that distant gaze? Yet he likes getting into a conversation with you. He has always some pleasant salutation on his lips, and will give you the time of the day, pass him never so often. "The top of the morning to you," says Pat. But Jack on shore won't work. The old father of over sixty summers may bend his back in the fields from sunrise to sunset; the old mother may go out charring to the nearest farmhouse; the young wife may go down to the sea and lug up pail after pail of sea-water for the young ladies, who have just taken the lodgings at those new red-brick houses, from London; but the muscular young sailor at home will be only ornamental, not useful. He prefers lolling over the cliff's edge, and watching the crab boats or the passing steamer for Yarmouth. Nor will he even take the trouble to learn to swim. On inquiry I found only one young fellow could swim in this village, and he was just out of his teens. Of the old men and middle-aged not one could swim, "and even if we could," said one, "look at these heavy leggings; we must cut them off or sink like lead." Yet Jack has a rough time of it at sea, and how often when at sea he may watch the land at night, sight the lighthouse

light revolving once in forty seconds, or spot the lights in the cottage windows, where the women and children are praying for their dear ones at sea and their safe return.

But we must go on our wanderings. Well, this is a lonely corner of creation, this East Anglian seclusion, it is a veritable *ultima Thule*—nothing beyond. We have spent twelve winters on Dartmoor, and many summers at Tintagel and Boscastle, and this spot is as lonely as any of them. There is no bathing round the coast of England to be compared to this stretch of deserted virgin sand, untraversed by any human feet between the watering-places of Cromer and Mundesley. Beyond this place, however, on the Bacton side, you must be careful; witness the fate of the two poor young fellows last year there. The sea below, and the springs above, the storms that beat at the base, and the land water that pours down in torrents, are making sad havoc of these Norfolk cliffs, composed, as they are, of a soft blue clay, which yield to every fresh incursion of wind and wave. Acres have gone off at a tangent from the land. The path we trod here last year is almost gone to-day, or lies down below, imbedded with tangled grass and wild flowers. The steps cut in the cliffs for the children twelve months ago are an impenetrable mass of crumbling clay on the sand. You tremble for the fate of those two lovers who will spoon so long in their eyrie's nest, just on the brow of the beetling cliff, impervious to all things external to themselves, and unconscious of the dangers below. So serious has been the fall of the cliffs eastward and westward from Cromer that the frightened inhabitants have had to move their tiny church some distance inland, leaving their old church tower and buried dead to coming destruction—making a scene of pathetic picturesqueness in this most lonely corner of the world. The old church (St. Martin's) was undermined and washed down in the reign of Richard II. Yet here poetry can be felt and peace can always be had. The sea-birds whirl about the old church tower, the reapers reap, the sun falls, and nature seeks the repose of silence and death. From here at night, when the sun has set over Cromer (the setting as well as rising sun can be seen from its jetty in the ocean), the bright revolving gleam of the white lighthouse with its brilliant lamps contrasts with the impurpled tint of the western sky, and makes nature a poem. Here, sitting on the old church later on, we see the bats fluttering round the ivy-mantled and ruined tower, listen to the moaning of the owl, and hear the song of the reapers returning over the fields.

"Where are the bathing machines as at Overstrand, Sidestrand, Trimingham, and Mundesley?" some one will ask, as he descends the path which the fishermen have cut out on the face of the crumbling cliff. Where, indeed, and what need of them? Between Cromer and Mundesley are a score or so of tents pitched

here and there to accommodate the visitors at the farmhouses, but this to all intents and purposes is a deserted yet beautiful shore. The caves in the cliffs provide ample dressing-rooms in the early morning, and right up to noon, for the matter of that, there is hardly a soul visible on cliff or sand except the enthusiastic pedestrian, or poet, or artist. The island of Sark is not more desolate. So the bather—and who wouldn't bathe here?—unrestricted by rules and regulations, can take his dip in the briny when and where he pleases, and enjoy the luxury of an air bath as well as a sea plunge.

"A nice day for your washing," observed an old "salt," whom I found sitting on the long pole at the cliff's edge this morning when I mounted from the beach, and conning his newspaper. Out of breath with the climb I was glad of a rest, and he not altogether indifferent to a chat, for he seemed deeply moved with the contents of his morning's sheet, for there are two dailies now even in the wilds of Norfolk. "Sad news this morning along the coast here—sad indeed."

"What's the matter?" said I.

He proceeds to read slowly, for the Norfolkers are not good scholars :

"The village of Caister, near Yarmouth, has just been the scene of a sudden and fatal catastrophe, by which seven widows and no less than thirty children have been rendered fatherless. The disaster—which was occasioned by the sinking of a beach yawl through a violent collision with a sunken wreck—occurred about a mile off the shore after midnight on Tuesday. It seems that the night was clear and calm, and that two beachmen or salvage men were, as usual, on watch at the Beach station. They observed a schooner apparently on the Lower Barber sands, and an alarm being given a large company of beachmen were soon ready to launch their boat. Fifteen stalwart fellows manned their fine yawl, the 'Zephyr,' and, putting up the sail, were soon going in the direction of the vessel at the rate of four or five knots an hour. Everybody on board knew of the existence of an awkward wreck about a mile from the shore, for most of the crew had weathered the storm on the very night when the ill-fated vessel foundered. It may be remembered that the event happened seven or eight years ago, when the vessel—which was laden with stone for works in Yarmouth—ran ashore, whilst the crew hung in the rigging all night, and were rescued by the life-boat in the morning. There the wreck has been ever since, and at low water the mast may now and then be observed standing out darkly just above the sea. Therefore it will be seen that the crew who manned the yawl at midnight on Tuesday had a lively recollection of that disaster, and knew full well where the sunken wreck of the stone ship was situated. The tide when they started was at the last quarter ebb, the wind being E.S.E., and

very moderate. It appears that the direction of the schooner supposed to be in need of assistance was very nearly the same as that in which the sunken wreck lay. At any rate, the yawl had to proceed in a north-easterly direction, and of course there was every anxiety to reach the schooner as quickly as possible. All went well for a time, and there is good reason to believe that those on board thought they were to the eastward of the wreck. However, it was shown that the man at the helm—a trusty and experienced sailor—reminded his comrades to look out for the ‘old stumps,’ meaning the bit of wreck with which all were so familiar. But hardly had the words been uttered when a terrible crash came. Then every one on board knew that they had struck the stump of the wreck with cruel force, and their hearts were seized with alarm and consternation. Their position was indeed a terrible one. The yawl, which had been struck on the port bow, was—as we heard from one of the survivors—literally ripped up. Some of the men rushed for the bags of ballast, of which there were twenty or thirty in the bottom of the boat, and commenced to throw them overboard. But the task was useless, and it would seem that in less time than we take to tell the story, the yawl was irreparably damaged, and that nothing could keep her afloat. Within two minutes of the crash the yawl had disappeared, and her crew was struggling in the sea, clinging to the oars and gear which were scattered about, and shouting for help in their desperate condition. Then was displayed a spirit of courage and determined effort on the part of the crew which forms the brightest page of this dark and painful story. John George, an elderly man, found himself struggling in the water, with his companions here and there crying for assistance. He secured a piece of floating gear, and by leaning upon this with one hand he succeeded in divesting himself of his outer garments. He shouted out that he was going to swim for the shore, hoping thereby not only to save his own life, but to gain assistance for the others. He started on his long swim, calling on his comrades to ‘keep up a good heart,’ and encouraging them with cheering calls in the darkness. One of the crew, named Plummer, was clinging to a piece of gear, and swimming as best he could towards the beach, and George, having passed him some little distance, sighted a shrimper, which was standing up trawling at the time. He called lustily to the men on board to ‘haul up and save life,’ and ere long the shrimper pulled up, so that George swam up to her, and was taken on board. Then he told his tale, and with praiseworthy energy they proceeded to strain every nerve in saving life. Plummer was the first rescued, and he was in an unconscious state when taken on board. Then four others were rescued. When the six men were recovered, all was quiet, and no cries for help broke the stillness of the night. Then it was feared that at least eight of the crew had sunk to rise no more, and as time

went on these fears were sadly realized. All was over, and the moon became overcast."

"How very sad and terrible. Isn't Caister one of the principal of your many lifeboat stations on this coast?"

"Yes, it is; and the men the bravest fellows out."

"Why were not more saved? Can't the sailors swim?"

"No, not one in a hundred. Our sailors can't swim. Look at that lad there," pointing to a young sailor of nineteen years of age, "he is the only chap hereabouts of all of us that can swim; and even if we could, look at our heavy boots and overalls."

"Any chance of recovery of the bodies?"

"Small; but they'll offer five pounds apiece, and every nerve will be strained to recover the dead bodies. Bad as it is to lose their relatives, it is a hundredfold worse not to *see* the corpse and bury it. That seems the great calamity to these Norfolk people."

We have a long ramble before us before we return to our old quarters. Sidestrand, a lonely fishing village as well as Overstrand, and the inland adjoining villages North and South Repps (the Icelandic *hreppar*-districts) are perhaps relics of Danish settlements on this coast. Of course at Trimingham we halt at the church, and make diligent inquiries for a celebrated relic, venerated as the head of St. John the Baptist, but could get no intelligence about it. Pilgrims used formerly to come from all parts to make offerings to the sacred relic, which was a source of considerable wealth to the then clergy. However, the schoolmaster is now abroad and "Murray" is everywhere studied, so we were politely told by an intelligent cicerone to prosecute our investigations after the Baptist's head at Amiens in France, which is still shown there. We were also further informed by the same authority that the block on which he was beheaded, brought from the East by Richard Cœur de Lion, was the chief treasure of the church of Charing, in Kent. Next we visited the famous Beacon, about a mile from the church, 300 feet high, and said to be the highest ground in Norfolk; but as the road goes over it—these cliffs are at some distance—it is possible you may pass over it without noticing it as we did. Yet it is quite worth the trouble to halt at the quaint square house (where, indeed, lodgings may be obtained if booked at least two months beforehand), and from its garden may be seen the spire of Norwich cathedral, and over thirty or forty churches may be counted. Yarmouth is discernible therefrom, and few persons will leave Cromer without having been to the Beacon. A road through some fields in the other direction will bring you down to the famous cliffs and wide-extended sea views.

Soon after this point Mundesley was reached, which is, from a straggling village, rapidly pushing to the front as a watering-place, and is being quoted in the same category with Cromer or next after it. It is developing on all sides, good inns and a great many

lodging-houses, but not lodgings to be got when we were there. It is one of those places sure "to take" in time; it is quiet, with fine air and pretty inland walks, a good sweep of coast on either side, and a coach to and fro every day to the North Walsham station has brought it within the pale of civilization. We noticed many London people among the visitors. There is good bathing to be had here, but visitors *should* always inquire before taking a dip. It is not safe on the eastern or Bacton side, owing to sandbanks and currents. While sitting under my "Juniper tree"—I mean at the hostelry of the "Ship," kept by one Juniper—he told me it was quite safe bathing at Mundesley, for he had been a regular bather some five-and-forty years and no harm ever came. The case of the young man from Buxton this year and a similar case last year, mine host put down to the fact that the young men couldn't swim, got on the Bacton side, then walked off a sandbank into deep water, and were drowned. The church (All Saints') stands on a lofty point on the cliff, and was formerly a noble edifice, but the tower is gone, the chancel and part of the nave are in ruins, and the remainder is fitted up for service. I should not be at all surprised to find Mundesley becoming very popular; it was crowded with excursionists the day I was there, and if building proceeds, although it will not rival, it may relieve the plethora of the Cromer season. The corn-fields and country about are pretty, the sands are very good, views from the cliffs commanding, and boating all that can be desired. The place derives interest from the fact of the father of Archbishop Juxon having been ejected from this living in 1640 for his loyalty to the ill-fated monarch Charles I. The poet Cowper was for some time at Mundesley in the autumn of 1795, when his mind had become hopelessly clouded. He had been here in his youth, and now "found something inexpressibly soothing in the monotonous sound of the breakers." His walks "were confined almost wholly to the sands, which at Mundesley are remarkably firm and level." "At two miles' distance along the coast," he writes to Lady Hesketh, "is a solitary pillar of rock that the crumbling cliff has left as the high water mark."

White, in his "Eastern England," thus writes of this ramble we have just taken: "The frequent stiles of old ship timber are suggestive of wrecks. The path is thickly bordered by 'luck,' as the natives call the pretty yellow flower of the kidney vetch, and the lotus, and red and white campion. And the cliff is so irregular, with many slips, foreshores, patches of grass and coltsfoot, and slopes of grey, red, and yellow, and a gaping undercliff, with a pond in the hollow, and a marly bluff and gullies and chines, as to look strikingly picturesque."

Here we must halt, except for a visit to the church at Trunch.

As in other parts of the county, *e.g.*, Reepham, there are two parish churches in one inclosure, but one here, St. Mary's, is in

ruins. How many churches in Norfolk have been ruined? The county seems over-churched. This is one of a cluster of churches of which the local rhyme runs :

“ Gimmingham, Trimmingham, Knapton, and Trunch,
North Repps and South Repps are all of a bunch.”

It was late when we had finished our perambulations and got to our old quarters again. The country round was in its full glory of summer loveliness. The crops were changing from deep green to golden yellow, and the scarlet poppies were not yet faded or dead among the corn. The root crops, lately so parched, had been refreshed by the recent rains, and the ferns on the hills, where the rabbits hide and dart in and out across your path, stand out rich and green against a sky line of Eton blue. No moon had yet shone out at night over the churchyard by the sea, or made the farmhouses decorated with the pale evening primrose and its stars of midnight bloom, as bright as the day. But after sunset comes that strange white light of summer-time, and the evening breezes bring a scent of ripening corn to the late lingerer over the farmhouse gate. The bright light of the Beacon reflectors flashes as potentially as ever its warning over the empurpled waters; the hum of the Cromer visitors on the jetty is stilled; the band has ceased to play; the spades and pails of the little ones are put away for the night; the bathing machines have been drawn up to the extreme fringe of the beach in apprehension of a high tide; the sand castles of to-day are undefended by the now slumbering youngsters; paterfamilias is having his last pipe; “all the air a solemn stillness holds,” and, as the poet Gray says :

“ The ploughman homeward plods his weary way ;
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.”

POVERO SCROCCON'!

IT is an early spring morning in Venice, one of those heavenly mornings which calls forth laggards from their beds to watch the light creep over its gorgeous palaces and gleaming canals, and to see the first rays of sunlight glow on the white and crimson and brown and purple sails of the fishing boats as they dip down the harbour. But long before the most enthusiastic and energetic tourist has ventured forth, while yet the dawn is grey, Povero Lelio has arisen from his snug couch, and surrounded by his ledgers, is preparing the day's work.

His abode is high up in a house in one of the poorer streets of Venice, but it is nevertheless extremely comfortable, and even in some respects luxurious. Povero Lelio himself is a tall, stern old man, with a certain meagreness of aspect, which corresponds ill with the nice little breakfast set forth at his elbow, smoking hot fragrant coffee, fresh butter, eggs, and crisp white rolls; he evidently is not indifferent to the comforts of life, nor disposed to stint himself in any way, and yet—even after the most toothsome of dinners Lelio, Povero Lelio! has an ill-fed and shrunken appearance. He would not change that look for the world. Upon those rather hollow cheeks, those deep-set eyes and that melancholy mouth, Lelio has lived for many years, and sumptuously too, in a quiet way. He has this apartment in Venice, spacious, and comfortably furnished when one reaches it, and he has lately bought a particularly nice villa near Pieve Cadore, where he retires with his family for his yearly *villeggiatura*. As for his family he has done very well by them, has endowed his two daughters liberally and married them well, and has launched his son in business in another part of Italy. He himself has “two gowns, and everything handsome about him,” but he is still industrious in his way, and despises not the means by which he made his fortune; nay, he still pursues with unflagging energy the occupation which has served him so well. Let us look for a moment over his shoulder at the ledgers from which he is making certain entries; they are such systematically-arranged, beautifully-written, neatly-kept ledgers that we shall have no difficulty in understanding what is written there. Look at this first column for instance, down which Lelio is glancing with rather a frowning brow. It is headed “Yearly subscriptions,” and reads as follows:

Prince Giovanelli, good for two hundred francs a year.
 Duchessa di Braga Beri, one hundred and fifty „
 Princess Paklinoff Berestoff, one hundred „
 Countess Marianna Baldini, one hundred „
 Conte Vicovara Verdi, one hundred and fifty, &c. „
 Madame Laurence Carlton, one hundred and fifty „
 Lord Charles Seaton, one hundred „

And so on, through a long list of the most distinguished Venetians or residents in Venice, who absolutely subscribe something annually to Lelio's support. The column sums up handsomely to something over seven thousand francs a year! But though all these generous people contribute to Lelio's support, they do not all know him by the same name nor in the same character; he is a clever fellow, who poses before some of his patrons as a retired soldier, who is incapacitated from earning his living by a wound in the chest; before others as a blind man; before others as an aged grandfather, who, having abandoned his small patrimony to his descendants, is now turned out upon the world, &c., &c., all different characters, but all sustained with consummate ability. Lelio has had his vicissitudes and experiences. Early in life he was the valet of a great English milord, and in that capacity he travelled much, and acquired a taste for high living and comfortably-furnished rooms, which he does not hesitate to gratify. However, it is not so much the way in which Lelio spends his money, as that in which he acquires it which is so interesting, and therefore let us turn away from the "yearly subscription" ledger—which he has just thrown down with a sigh of impatience and disgust, and the remark that, "All those *signori* paid at Easter"—to the other ledger, which is registered "Hotels on the Grand Canal, ditto on the Riva degli Schiavoni, &c." Still another ledger bears the legend "Pensions," and another, "Forestieri in private apartments." Lelio has mapped out Venice as carefully as if he were a police officer.

"Antonio!" he calls suddenly, raising his head.

"Sissignore!" replies Antonio, promptly appearing, from the kitchen apparently, for he has his cook's cap on.

"Are they all here?"

"Sissignore, old Paolina is not come yet; but little Gianni and Pietro Collino (crook neck) and Clelia Gobba (Clelia the hunchback) and Matteo Cecco (the blind man) are all here."

"Let them come in," says Lelio magisterially.

A fearfully dirty, ragged crew they are, who do not by any means diffuse the odours of Araby the blest as they crowd into the little *salon*, and make profound bows and courtesies before the august presence of their patron. Lelio has a list in his hand, and he looks round upon his *employés*, and presently begins to deal them out like a pack of cards.

"Gianni and his brothers and sisters and Elisabetta's baby to the little boat, anywhere between the Santa Maria Salute and the Lido."

"Clelia Gobba to the Piazza."

"Pietro Collino and his family to the hotels on the Grand Canal."

"Matteo Cecco to the Rialto."

And then he begins to enumerate as follows: "Twelve *forestieri* left the Hotel Britannia yesterday, and eight arrived at midnight, fifteen arrived at the Hotel Danieli. What is that? Who spoke?"

"It is Pietro Collino," exclaims Antonio, who has been looking on and listening with much interest as he makes a feint of arranging the room. "Padrone," he continues, "Pietro Collino says that he and his family were turned away from five hotels yesterday; they could not even get into the court. The *camerieri* (waiters) called after them, *Scrocconi!* and all the *forestieri* laughed and mocked, and gave not even a centesimo."

"Incapable one! Beast!" says Lelio, glowering angrily upon the shrinking Pietro Collino. "To what end, imbecile, has God blessed you with a crook neck, if you cannot get your living by it? Go, then, to the Lido to-day, and beware, if you do not bring back more than five francs at night. Via! Away with you all! Antonio, bring me the white beard and wig, and the brown coat. I will take the hotels on the Grand Canal to-day."

And waving away his affrighted vassals, Lelio rises majestically, divests himself of his dressing gown, and is duly transformed by Antonio into a white-bearded, white-haired veteran. A rub with a small piece of flannel has brought a ghastly pallor to his thin brown face, and a skilful touch or two from his own practised hand has marked deep shadows under his cavernous dark eyes. He looks at the glass and is satisfied. It is a worn, haggard, stooping old man, clad in ragged and dusty garments, for whom Antonio holds open the door with:

"A pleasant walk to you, Padrone."

"Ugh, ah! ah!" replies Lelio, too absorbed in his rôle to reply politely. "Antonio mio," he says suddenly, as he is about to leave the house.

"Sissignore."

"Dinner at seven, mind, ravaiuoli, and macaroni con pasta and a flask of Valpolicello."

"Sissignore."

"Ugh, ugh, ugh, ah, ah, ah!" and rehearsing a most sepulchral and frightful cough, Lelio slowly descends the steps.

"Diavolo! Santa Maria! if he isn't the king of *scrocconi* and the greatest *birbone* (rascal) that ever lived," says Antonio admiringly, as he watches him out of sight.

Scroccone—in Venetian dialect *scroccon*—is the term applied in Italy exclusively to a class of people who pose as beggars, and

of whom Lelio is the type. His career, as above described, has had its parallel in many parts of Italy, but especially in Rome, where the famous Beppino, the beggar of the Spanish steps, achieved a success which was really brilliant. Everybody in Rome—perhaps more particularly the tourists, who were the objects of his special attentions—knew Beppino, and for more than thirty-five years his aged, ragged, haggard, but most picturesque figure adorned the Spanish steps. Young bridal couples come to Rome for their honeymoon, pitied and succoured Beppino, and departed, returned years after to find him as immovable and unchanged as the stones upon which he sat, and returned yet again, grey-haired and grandparents, to find him still the same. When one thinks of it, that picturesque white beard and flowing hair must certainly have been false at the beginning of his career, but he grew genuinely old and grey-haired as the years went on. Beppino amassed a very large fortune, endowed his daughters—he had four—very handsomely, giving to each, in addition to the money down, a villa in the neighbourhood of Rome, and launched his sons well in various occupations. He was proud of his success, and particularly proud of having achieved it without the aid of a variety of disguises, for his career as a *scroccone* began and ended on the Spanish steps. Every one who recalls him will recall also the peculiarly bland and suave manner in which he called down the blessings of Heaven upon his benefactors, “May God reward you in Paradise!” “May the benediction of our Lord Jesus Christ rest upon you!” “May the Holy Madonna and the saints and angels watch over you!” he used to murmur in his deep, rich, melancholy voice. But as years went on, Beppino’s character became slightly soured. It may be that his unbroken success spoiled him; it may be that as he grew older it became a distressing effort to sit all day long on the Spanish steps in all weathers, and really, when one thinks of it, it must have required a temporary self-denial little short of heroism to do so; but at any rate, Beppino suffered occasional lapses from the bland melancholy which was his distinguishing characteristic. He allowed himself to believe that it was his right to exact a sort of charitable toll from every human being who passed his post. He would not have deigned, *bien entendu*, to beg anywhere but on the Spanish steps, and if any one had the indecency not to respond favourably to his appeal, he permitted himself the relief of “bestrewing them with some choice flowers of speech,” after the manner of the immortal Sairey Gamp. For a long time he persisted in this habit unchallenged. Either people did not care or did not heed, or more likely still, did not understand, the showers of maledictions heaped upon their heads; but it is certainly the case that Beppino still continued to sit on his favourite stone and heap blessings and curses as his humour prompted him. Poor old fellow! He was rich when calamity

overtook him; he had been rich long before; it was only habit, the habit which is the life of old age, which made him return daily to his post and ask for alms. Nevertheless, it so happened that one day the blow fell, and Beppino was banished from the Spanish steps for evermore. It was a cold, rainy, winter's day, grey and gloomy, it had even frozen a little, as much as it ever does in Rome, and an icy wind had chilled the venerable *scroccone* to the bone, and rasped his nerves to their utmost limit of endurance. It was towards the afternoon of this uncomfortable and profitless day that he saw a lady of distinguished appearance approaching him. Of course she was a foreigner, Beppino thought; no native Italian would venture abroad in such unpleasant weather, and though she was stoutly booted and rough cloaked, and carried her own umbrella, the signs of rank and wealth were visible enough to his practised eye as he bowed himself before her, and in his best *tremulo* asked for alms. She refused silently; then, as he persisted, said distinctly that she had nothing for him, nothing whatever. Her accent was foreign, and the irritated Beppino thought himself quite safe in pouring out the venom accumulated through several hours of repeated disappointment.

"Beast of a woman! Pig! —a,—a,—a,—a," he screamed in the musical words, which sound sweetly enough when one does not understand them, but are in reality epithets so terrible that they are usually represented in all languages by a dash. They were the last words he ever uttered on the Spanish steps.

The lady whom he thus apostrophized was the English wife of the Sindaco of Rome. She happened to understand Italian perfectly, and reported Beppino's language to her husband, who at once had the offender arrested and brought before the tribunal. He was neither fined nor imprisoned, but perhaps he would have preferred either alternative to the one which awaited him, for he was banished from his post and forbidden ever again to beg within the walls of Rome. He was over seventy, and it was his death-blow; he lingered for a year or two and then died of *ennui*.

Some years ago quite a famous *scroccone* haunted the streets of Florence. He was not an artist like our friend Lelio, nor a hero like Beppino, but he wandered about the streets of Florence and begged, after a simple fashion of his own. He had a room in the fifth story of a very humble *hôtel garni*, and as he always carried his key with him and never allowed any one to enter his room on any pretext, the good people of the house really believed that he was almost as poor as he pretended to be. But one morning he kept his room; the day wore on, it was evening, night, and still he had not stirred, and had given no answer to repeated calls. When the door was forced he was found dead in his bed, and disposed about the room in various places of concealment were sacks of money in gold, silver, and copper coins, amounting in all to nearly 50,000 francs.

There is another old beggar, who among many infests the road to Fiesole. He is a marvellous specimen of age, decrepitude, and squalor, and looks as if he might have posed for Doré's "Wandering Jew." This venerable gentleman's favourite haunt is a certain curve of the road just above San Domenico, where the hill is so steep that carriages must go slowly, and woe to the unfortunate *forestiere* to whose carriage old Samuele chooses to cling, for he is not to be shaken off for anything less than a piece of money, no matter how small. On one occasion a party of *forestieri*, who had been driven nearly frantic by beggars on the drive from Florence to Fiesole, and who had come to the philosophic conclusion that the best way to get rid of beggars was to give to them, suddenly agreed to give a centime to everybody. But how to get the centimes? All their small change had vanished, and the difficulty was to change a piece of ten francs. The coachman was appealed to, but had no money. He was a man of resources, however, and called up old Samuele from the wall where he was sunning himself.

"That old beggar man!" exclaimed one of the party in dismay. "He will never be able to change ten francs."

"Wait and see, Eccellenza," said the good Doro with a wink. "Old Samuele can change that and more too."

And so, indeed, it proved. With a slightly sardonic smile old Samuele drew from various pockets some nice little packets of soldi and centessimi (tiny copper coins one-fifth the value of a soldo), and after handing over three francs in copper, produced a five-franc and two-franc piece in silver. He was not in the least abashed, and seemed rather to enjoy the joke in a quiet way.

But it is in writing letters that the Florentine *scroccone* excels. Micawber himself could not rival him. Like that immortal gentleman, he has a delicacy of feeling which prevents him from making his wants and sorrows known *vivâ voce*. Instead, he deluges the objects of his hopes with letters. On returning from the yearly *villeggiatura* the resident *forestieri* especially find piles of begging letters awaiting them, addressed to the Conte and Contessa Smith, Marchese and Marchesa Jones, &c., as the case may be. No *scroccone* ever dreams of addressing a letter without prefixing some title to the name of the recipient, even though the republican laws in that respect may have been explained to him twenty times over. Marchesa is a title oftener used than any other, as having presumably a more softening effect upon the republican temper than either baroness or countess, and sometimes in moments of extreme need Duke or Duchess Brown, Smith, or Jones are appealed to. The epistolary *scroccone* is always a person abundantly provided with references; he gives chapter and verse with extreme precision, but unluckily the lofty personages referred to are usually long since dead and forgotten.

For example :

"Most Illustrious Signora Marchesa Smith,—

"It is with extremest pain that I, once, alas! a *signore*, come before your ladyship to weary you with my requests, but the report of your exquisite courtesy and generosity are known to all Florence, and have emboldened even me to implore your renowned bounty. I live very near your ladyship, in the Via della Stella, and my abode is poor, miserable, and wretched in the extreme. For many days I have eaten nothing but a little bread, and your excellency may imagine how my digestion suffers from such insufficient nourishment when I tell you that in my childhood I sat at a royal table! Yes, most illustrious lady, it was even so. My father was one of the preceptors of the Prince Ferdinando, the son of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and I was frequently admitted to the table of the young princes and princesses, and I am sure that if his Royal Highness Prince Francesco, the uncle of Prince Ferdinando (Prince Ferdinando himself, as your excellency knows, is hopelessly insane), knew of my need he would with the well-known generosity of his royal heart instantly fly to my assistance. But what would you have? His royal highness is in the remotest part of Austria, or some other foreign country (*sic*), and is now very old and deaf and bowed with many troubles. I should not know where to address him, nor their royal highnesses the archduchesses, his aunts, to whom my own grand-aunt was reader many years ago, and who had for her the highest esteem. Now listen, illustrious lady, to what I am about to request of you. I have the greatest need of a warm winter *paletôt*, and observing your excellency's son go by daily on his way to college, and seeing how fine and well-grown a young gentleman he is, I have reflected that he must have many clothes which he would not deign to wear, and I implore you to see if he has not already thrown aside that of which I stand in need, and to bestow it upon me, for I had a severe attack of hemorrhage last winter and cannot go out in this rigorous weather because I have not the proper garments. And if your ladyship should not have a proper *paletôt*, then I pray you to give me something, even a few centessimi, but to place them in an envelope, for it would wound my feelings to receive them from the hand of a servant. And, begging your excellency to pardon the liberty I have taken, I sign myself,

"Your excellency's most devoted,

"Most obedient, and humble servant,

"DOMENICO AUGUSTO BARTALI."

And again:

"Most Illustrious Countess Jones,—

"Knowing, in common with all Florence, the exquisite goodness of your ladyship's heart and the vast extent of your

bounty, by the which, as your ladyship knows, I have already profited, I venture once again to appeal to you. I know that the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul have turned against me, poor unfortunate one that I am! and that they have refused any longer to recommend me to the charity of good Christians, saying that I am an unworthy person, and that I have means of support, and need not the assistance of the charitable. But I hope that you, illustrious lady, will not allow yourself to listen to their calumnies, but will continue to aid me, poor wretched abandoned one, and likely to die of hunger without your charitable aid; for, as your excellency knows, the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul are human beings like the rest of us, and have their prejudices, most wholly without reason, for I am an innocent and afflicted person, and I have had twins since your ladyship went away in *villeggiatura*, and so have now eight children, and my unfortunate husband is again in the hospital, and unless your ladyship succours us we must all perish of cold and hunger, and so I commit myself to your ladyship's compassion, and sign myself,

"Your ladyship's most afflicted, devoted,

"And humble servant,

"TERESA BARI.

"P.S.—I implore your ladyship not to listen to the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul; for when the Sisters recommended me they were right, but now they are wrong, and I do not know what has changed them."

Here is an example of an "occasional *scroccone*," one who works for his living at times, but falls back upon his epistolary efforts when he finds it convenient to do so.

"To the Illustrious Marchese Brown.

"Most Illustrious Marchese,—

"As your excellency's goodness and generosity are famous, you will not be surprised that I, in common with all the suffering, appeal to you for pity. I had frequently the honour of driving your excellency when I was the coachman of the illustrious Signora Tarrinone; but her excellency is avaricious, and has gone away for her *villeggiatura* without providing for me and my family, and we are in so great need that I thought I would take up a collection among her friends. And so I venture to appeal to your lordship's well-known generosity, and I kiss your lordship's hands, and commend myself to your compassion. And I am your excellency's most obedient, and grateful, and devoted servant,

"GIOVANNI BIANCHI."

"But I know no Signora Tarrinone," exclaims the bewildered Mr. Brown, as he reads this puzzling epistle.

"Sissignore," replies his servant Federigo, who has been looking on with great interest. "It is the grand English lady who lives in the Palazzo Giorgio, and who gives so many dinners and balls."

"Oh! Mrs. Harrington! But she is always so considerate and generous to all her servants, and pays them board and wages."

"Sissignore, but Giovanni was always rather a *scroccone* in disposition, and he has got into debt, and so thought of taking up a collection."

"Good heavens! Well, tell him I cannot give him anything!"

"He will trouble the *signora* again," says Federigo lingering.

"Confound him! Well, give him a franc, and tell him never to show his face here again."

"Sissignore."

So the coachman makes his round of the Signora Tarrinone's friends. If he should be disgraced and dismissed on her return, he will become a *scroccone* in good earnest.

"And now, signora, what is to be done about that blessed Luigi Barsotti?" says Sister Agatha, as she winds up some accounts with her friend and aid. "As you know," she continues, "he has got himself sent to Spezzia frequently for four years, and there he changed his name, and had, so he said, a blind eye, and he raised money for an operation, and all the time he was living a gay life, and eating and drinking of the best."

"Well, of course, I shall not give him anything."

At this juncture the servant brings in a letter.

"Here he is again!" exclaims the *signora*, handing the letter to Sister Agatha, who, with smile and a "*Pazienza!*" reads as follows:

"Most Illustrious and Charitable Lady,—

"The youth Luigi Barsotti, that same youth already aided by your excellency for four years past, and who was recommended by Sister Agatha as wanting to journey to Spezzia, and there being at work as shoemaker at the villa called the Villa di Pagliano—know, oh illustrious lady, that I fell, and broke two ribs, and hurt my left leg most terribly, and now for nine months past I have been unable to earn a crust of bread for the poor beings dependent upon me. Behold the reason why I turn myself to your excellency, and I will venture to believe that I shall not receive a negative, *for one miserable little once more (sic)*, because your excellency is so charitable a lady to the poor, and I will pray our Lord to grant you an eternal recompense.

"Hoping in your ladyship's gracious charity, I close my letter.

"Further, I wish to your illustrious excellency, and to your adorable family a good and a happy Easter, and I sign myself,

"Your excellency's most devoted

"And most humble servant,

"LUIGI BARSOTTI."

"Do not say *povero scroccon'*," says youthful severity, "say *birbone* (rascal) of a *scroccon'*."

But when one thinks of the life, the long daily woven tissue of lies and tricks and blasphemy, the loss of individuality, the want of self-respect, the slow degradation which keeps pace with the worldly prosperity, pity fills the heart as well as blame, for the human being who voluntarily leads such a life. He is still *povero*, *povero scroccon'!*

M. L. T.

FANTASIA.

Oh ! let my tirèd head feel the motion of thy breast,
As the fisher in his bark feels the heaving of the sea ;
But there its throbbing woe finds a far securer rest,
For there no winds resort, no storms bewilder me.

Then let me faintly hear thy sweet lips break into song,
As the fisher hears the waves break in music on the shore ;
And while thy lovelocks hang like the sunbeams bright and long,
With folds of gleaming silk mine eyes are covered o'er.

The golden curtains close, around me lies the court,
On rosy wreaths I lie, white lilies kiss my hand,
And maidens, tender faced, swift as swallows, flit and sport,
For Time and Tide are dead, and this is Fairyland.

EDWARD SYDNEY TYLEE.

UP THE TEIGN.

By GEORGE LAMBERT.

ON a certain evening late in July Jack Camden and I, brother briefless ones, "might have been seen" seated, after a comfortable dinner, in the smoking-room of the "Royal Hotel," Teignmouth, with an array of maps before us, engaged in the pleasant occupation of marking out our route for a walking, or rather strolling tour from the mouth of the Teign to its source on Dartmoor, the said tour to end in a sojourn at Chagford, from which convenient centre we intended to explore the recesses of the moor at our leisure.

Fortune favoured our start, for the next day was all that heart could desire in the way of weather. As in duty bound, we first regarded the mouth of our river, a picturesque scene enough, with the low-lying sandy shores of Teignmouth on one side of the narrow estuary, and on the other the pretty village of Shaldon, backed by the bold promontory of the Ness. The excitement of the start was upon Jack Camden; he was vivacious and jovial, and I congratulated myself upon my luck in securing so pleasant a companion. As we left Teignmouth, with its fair array of tree-embowered villas stretching up towards the heights of Haldon, and tramped along the road to Newton Abbot with the now broad estuary of the Teign on our left, and the village of Bishop's Teignton on our right, the view was one to gladden the heart of a landscape painter; the tide was in, and the broad bosom of the waters glistened in the bright sunshine, while the slowly sailing clay barges, and not a few pleasure boats with their crews of jocund holiday makers gave the necessary life, and completed the brightness of the scene. The opposite side of the estuary was beautiful exceedingly, the vivid green of the pasture-land and the golden hue of the already ripening corn contrasting with the deep red of those fields where mother earth showed her homely face. Along a pleasant road, with the broad expanse of water on our left, our way led us past Coombe Ferrers, a holiday resort across the estuary, celebrated for the excellence of its cockles and cream, which two incongruous comestibles are partaken of together!

Some four or five miles of dusty walking brought us to Kingsteignton, and passing through that village, the home of the miry clay-cutter, we crossed the Teign and reached Newton Abbot, a

thriving railway-made town, and not particularly interesting; so after satisfying the cravings of hunger and resting ourselves, we retraced our steps to Kingsteignton, making for Chudleigh, our bourn for the night. We might, if we had chosen, gone from Newton to Chudleigh by train, for there is the funniest little line in the world running for some little distance up the Teign Valley; the railway in question begins in the middle of a heath, and appropriately enough ends in the middle of a field; but we scorned such "soft delights," and sturdily tramped along the pleasant tree-shaded road towards our night's lodgement.

The vivacity which had marked Jack's demeanour on our early start, and, indeed, until now, was evidently wearing off, and his conversation became fitful and *distracte*, while one or two portentous sighs which he heaved induced me to think that he was suffering from some bodily ailment. "What is the matter, old man?" I asked; "don't you feel well, eh?"

"Well!" he exclaimed scornfully, and lapsed into silence. "It is of no use, I *can't* forget her," was his next astounding remark; and *then* I knew that I was "in for it." I, Thomas Standish, a man without one ounce of romance in his disposition, was to be tied to the sole society of a man suffering under the most acute form of the disorder of the affections! Alas, it was too much! Jack had "disclosed his pains" to a "being," her name was Julia, she loved him, and her grovelling and wealthy parents refused their consent because of the poverty of Jack's prospects. What a vista of unlimited boredom did this state of things open up to me. Impossible to quarrel with Jack Camden, and so part company, for he is the best-tempered fellow in the world, and I know full well, *won't* take offence. These sad reflections occupied my mind as I was forced to lend an unwilling ear to Jack's long and elaborate descriptions of the beauties, physical and mental, of the fair Julia, and his equally long denunciations of her "stern parent."

Jack's dismal lucubrations continued without cessation until we reached the Chudleigh railway station; we had bidden a temporary farewell to our friend the river at the bridge, over which the road from Newton leads, and we were glad to hear once more its cheerful sound, as it roared over its weir by the little station. Turning sharply to the right, we walked up a steep, shady road, and in a few minutes found ourselves in the clean and bright little town of Chudleigh; our tramp had given us an excellent appetite, and even Jack found a solatium for his amatory woes in discussing the fare which mine host of the "Clifford Arms" set before us.

The next day was spent in exhausting the beauties of Chudleigh, to the accompaniment, on Jack's part, of a monody on the fruitful topic of the fair Julia. Under the huge trees of Ugbrook House, the lordly seat of the Cliffords, on the commanding heights of the far-famed Chudleigh Rocks, even in the murky shadows of the

Pixies Cave, did that infatuated young man continue to pour out the painful story of his woes; the glades of Ugbrook Park, and the sunflecked valley by the rock, with its purling brooklet only added fuel to his amorous fire: indeed, so charmed was Jack with the delightful scene that he there and then determined that if ever the beneficent sun should shine upon his and Julia's nuptials, Chudleigh should be the happy place destined to become in after years a hallowed memory as the scene of the blissful honeymoon.

When master Jack came to this determination, we were seated on the mossy sward near the bold escarpment of the rock; our long and desultory ramblings had brought us to the close of the day, and the sun was sinking over Dartmoor way, bringing out into clean-cut prominence the strangely beautiful sky line of the far off moor: those extraordinary features of wild Dartmoor, the grey granite tors, were wonderfully distinct, from near Hay Tor, formed like an ancient high peaked saddle, to misty brother giants in the far distant recesses of the rolling moorland; the lovely valley of the Teign lay close at hand between us and the advanced guard of the moorland with its widely-scattered farmsteads, whilst here and there a white gleaming village showed, clustered round a sturdy square-towered church, perched up in some apparently inaccessible height. Having taken a fond farewell of this lovely scene, we descended to the more prosaic level of daily wants and needs, and strolled back to Chudleigh Town, and to the hospitable welcome of our inn.

Moist and humid Devon favoured us with a "taste of her quality" in this regard, for the following morning began in mist, continued in fine, soft rain, and ended in a regular downpour. Fortunately we were well prepared to grapple with the unkind elements, and with stout boots, and leggings, and light waterproofs we feared no foe of this sort, and soon after breakfast we packed anew our haversacks and (after certain dealings in which the coin of the realm had its part) we bade adieu to our host and to pleasant Chudleigh, and started down the hill to Chudleigh Bridge; crossing the bridge and turning to the right, we tramped along an astonishingly slushy road, with the Teign gurgling over its stony bed upon our right, and a hilly country, stretching up from the road, upon our left. Our destination was the "Teign House," an inn about eight miles from Chudleigh, and a favourite resort with the disciples of Isaak Walton, for the river is famous for its trout, which, though small, are of an excellent flavour; salmon, too, sometimes find their way up the stream, not much to the joy of the fishermen, for they devour the young trout.

A consultation with our maps determined us upon making a detour, and passing through the little villages of Trusham and Ashton, and crossing the Teign at Crocombe Bridge by Trusham station, we breasted a long hill, whence we had a misty view of a

large white mansion, Canon Teign, the seat of the Exmouth family, and of Hennock, a village which seemed to cling precariously to the steep hillside on the other side of the valley; and so, still mounting, we came to Trusham, a little cluster of houses, with a tiny church and an equally tiny school. A crust of bread and butter and a cup of cider at the inn, refreshed us for our muddy tramp of some two miles along a high ridge, with the Haldon range on our left, to the turn to Ashton; down an amazingly steep decline we fared our way past the rectory, most snugly ensconced in its green-meadowed seclusion, to Ashton church. We were told afterwards that here there is a wonderful screen with pictured saints and martyrs, but all we wanted just then was to get under cover and out of our streaming waterproofs, so, passing under the high-placed church, we came to a group of houses by Ashton station, and crossing the river by an ancient-looking bridge, we struck off to the right, and in half-an-hour came upon our halting place, the "Teign House." Not a very imposing edifice this Devonian hostelry, but trim and neat enough, and cleanly and comfortable withal. The bill of fare was not an extensive one, but we were far too hungry to be fastidious, and an appetizing dish of bacon and fried potatoes, the true Devonian supper, soon presented a forlorn appearance under our combined attacks, a goodly jug of cider flanking the homely fare.

On inquiring of our host the next morning the way to Bridford, where we learnt from the guide book another fine church screen was to be seen—"Bridford?" said he, "I reckon you be goin' to the bazzar, then?" "What may a bazzar be?" I asked.

"'Tis a kind of ray-ligious fair they be going to hold by rason of the ray-storin' of their church up there. Haven't 'ee seen the bills?"

This was a chance not to be thrown away, and we determined to have a peep at this village festival; as, however, the frugal folk did not begin their holiday till the morning's work was well over, we profitably employed the interval in a stroll to the church of Doddiscombsleigh, incited thereto by our landlord, who informed us there were some "terrible fine picture windows" there. Soon after we had crossed the Teign on our way thither, by a wooden bridge warranted (so a board informed us) *unsafe* for locomotives, we came upon the forlorn-looking terminus of the Teign Valley Railway, which terminus was, verily and indeed, in a field! for the line is open for passenger traffic only as far as Ashton, some three miles off, and nothing but a very occasional goods train runs as far as the "Teign House." Doddiscombsleigh—what a voluminous name!—church is well worth a visit; the windows, which are indeed a wonderful bequest from our ancestors, were once in a dilapidated state: their melancholy condition so worked upon the artistic emotions of a member of a well-known firm of stained-glass window makers in London, that

he determined to restore them at his own proper charge and cost ; which determination, moreover, he carried out right generously.

An early and a hasty lunch brought us to the time for starting Bridford-wards ; we had no difficulty in finding our way, for several groups of gaily-dressed pedestrians were evidently bent on the same errand with ourselves, and following in their wake, we mounted a hill—a hill did I call it?—a veritable mountain—a solid mile of hard climbing ; and soon came within the merry sound of the Bridford church bells. The village was neither too clean, nor too odoriferous, but the churchyard was a pleasant contrast, for it was as neat and trim as rake, and hoe, and scythe could make it. The pretty little church was plentifully bedecked with flowers and ferns for the festal occasion, but the authorities had wisely left the screen untouched, and truly it were to “ paint the lily ” to decorate so lovely a monument of antiquity, with its delicate tracery, its quaintly-carved figures, and its pleasing colouring, toned down by Time’s own chastening hands. Eschewing the delights of the “ bazzar ”—that “ ray-ligious fair ”—we looked on for a few moments at the merry, pretty scene in the rectory grounds, and following the course of a little brook down a flowery valley, we turned sharp round to the right for a couple of miles to Christow, with its high-towered church, its thatch-roofed homesteads, and weird-looking deserted mines, and so home to “ Teign House,” supper, and bed.

The next morning saw us pursuing our leisurely course along a refreshingly flat road towards Dunsford ; we soon came to the precipitous lane which winds its tortuous course to Bridford, and with thankful hearts (for the day was a “ blazing hot ” one) that we had not again to face the steep pitches of yesterday’s “ outing,” we panted on, past a large mill in full and noisy work, with a huge wain just starting from its door, full of heavy sacks of flour, past the miller’s house and trim garden bright with full blooming rose trees, past a noisy weir, over a bridge, under a fine avenue of elm trees, up to the right and into Dunsford Town (as any cluster of houses with a church in its midst is called in these parts). Dunsford is a village of considerable size ; the ancient church with its well-kept yard and high square tower, is well placed on a slight eminence in the midst of the village, and beside the church, to the right, is one of the quaintest and loveliest farmhouses imaginable ; a stretch of garden divides the house from the road, from which a straight path leads to the deep porch, a long line of thatched roof, broken by dormer windows into all kinds of angles, shows above the porch, the windows appear in all manner of unexpected quarters, and the varied outlines of the whitewashed domicile would delight the soul of the artist.

Having gazed our fill we left the “ town ” behind us, and soon found ourselves on Dunsford Bridge. Here the character of the river scenery entirely changes ; hitherto the stream has taken its

noisy way over its rocky bed through fresh, green pasture bottoms, but from Dunsford Bridge, or Steps Bridge—so called from the stepping stones which erstwhile marked the ford—the scene changes, and the river winds its way through deep defiles. What a lovely view is that from Dunsford Bridge! Looking up the river the eye rests gratefully upon range after range of hills so steep as to defy cultivation, and clad to their very summits with tiny oak trees, which trees, so mine host of the “Half Moon Inn” informed us, are cut down in ripping time—the season when the oak bark is “ripped off”—and stowed up for winter fuel, springing up again next year, and growing till they reach the proper height for cutting down again. The said “Half Moon Inn” is a cosy thatched habitation, convenient to the wayside, close to the bridge, and tempting to the thirsty wayfarer; moreover it is, as the landlord informed us, a favourite resort for spring and summer picnickers, for the woods about Dunsford Bridge are covered with flowers, and must be lovely indeed in the sweet Spring time, when the daffydownillies spread out their golden carpeting and the white anemones star the woodland paths. Along one of these woodland paths which took its winding way beside the river’s brim, we strolled towards Clifford Bridge, Fingle Bridge and Mill, and the prosaic call of luncheon, or nuncheon, as the true Devonian calls that meal.

We were now entered upon by far the loveliest part of our little river, for the walk by the river side from Dunsford Bridge, past Clifton Bridge, to Fingle Bridge is truly beautiful; steep hillsides, chequered with oak scrub patches of varying height, now closing up to the river, almost barring the way, and now receding and opening into wide stretches of verdant pasture land, many-hued butterflies flitting hither and thither; the twittering of the birds, more disposed in the languid heat to a noontide siesta than to the vocal harmony with which they had saluted the dawn of day, and which would again usher in its decline, the murmur of the river, now soft as it glides along between narrow banks, and now loud and boisterous as the mossy boulders check its course, and send it fretting on its way; there a tiny streamlet coursing adown some sharp hillside is marked by a fringe of lovely ferns, and here we come upon a patch of the rare and lofty *osmunda regalis*, deep-rooted in a marshy spot, and (fortunately) defying the efforts of despoiling picnickers: alas! this beautiful fern is becoming rarer and more rare, and bids fair soon to become an extinct species. And so, loitering on our easy way, we leave for a short time the river’s brim, take to the road, and soon come to Clifford Bridge. Resting for awhile, we looked from the bridge downwards towards the wooded banks we had already passed, and upwards over an undulating country towards a deep gorge which bounded the river view. Here we were nonplussed, for the road led away from the Teign to the right and to the left, and no sign was there of any path by

the river's side. An aged rustic, who was making his noon-tide meal of bread and meat, washed down with copious draughts of cider from a little wooden barrel, in a barn beside a big farmhouse on the other side of the river, solved this difficulty for us. Finding from him that the path henceforth was on the left bank, we passed through a gate a little way from the Teign, and continued our course along an open space, with pretty pastoral peeps through trees, through an oak wood, past a tiny mill, with its black revolving wheel, through a wired-in plantation of young larch trees, and so to the river again. On through shady woods, whose trees overhung the stream, our path lay, and not without its little dangers and discomforts, too, for, as if to remind us that there lurks a serpent in every earthly paradise, there in very deed was a horrent viper, sunning himself in the centre of the path, and not to be moved without the cautious application of a stick. "Vipers are very plenty," we were told at Fingle Mill and if the vipers were "plenty," so were the flies also; from the common, tedious house-fly, who had, in countless myriads, forsaken the delights of civilization and taken to the wilder delights of the ferny woodland, to the more pestilent species of river-flies, not unlike the "muskitter" of foreign climes, and equally pertinacious if not, perhaps, so painful in the results of its bite.

And now the scenery became wilder; on the right side of the river facing us as we journeyed on was a succession of precipitous stony pitches, ascending to and ending in two bleak bluffs crowned with rocks, the further one of the two seeming to bar our passage. Walking on for a short space, with scrub woods on our left and the river rushing over its rocky bed and the steep incline of the huge cliffs on our right, we came to Fingle Mill, a whitewashed, thatch-roofed house, with a bleak hill behind it, and the river between; truly a quaint home in one of the wildest and loveliest spots of lovely Devon. Here we rested awhile, and found homely provender of milk and bread and butter, by no means to be despised after our long and hot though, for the most part, shady ramble.

This was Saturday, and we had all along made up our minds to spend the Sunday in Moreton-Hampstead, where we were told we should find a comfortable inn; so after resting and refreshing, we strolled on to the bridge, the far-famed Fingle Bridge, a few yards above the little mill; a primitive structure enough, roughly built, with two quaint corner refuges for foot passengers, for should a cart or carriage traverse the narrow way "unbeknownst" whilst one was rapt in the marvellous view from the bridge, these refuges would prove serviceable. It would, indeed, be easy for a man to forget such trifles as carts and waggons whilst taking in long draughts of the picturesque in this supremely lovely spot. The bridge is in the centre of a circle of wild, rocky and woody heights; the hills rise sheer from the river's

brim on the one side, and from a green oasis of pasture-land on the other. Looking *down* the stream, there is this green meadow on the right, with the mill close at hand, and on the left the steep declivity with its rock-crowned head. The deep, tree-clad slopes, the quaint, ancient-looking bridge, the bold heights, and the white road gleaming through the trees—I could have gazed half-an-hour at the lovely scene, the more particularly as my legs were “a trifle stiff,” and I was altogether more than a “trifle” tired ; but Master Jack was restless ; he had, in fact been restless all the day, he was evidently anxious now to get on to Moreton as quickly as possible. This I put down, well-knowing Jack’s appetite, to a keen desire for a “square meal,” with civilized accompaniments and surroundings, and I confess I sympathized with him, for “bacon and tatties” are good, most excellent, in truth, but they are luxuries which are apt to pall upon any one who is not “to the manner bred,” and visions of more appetizing and esculent food had also arisen before *my* mental sight, and I looked forward to a comfortable dinner and a pleasant evening with my friend to follow. The “comfortable dinner” I duly obtained at the “White Hart Hotel” in Moreton-Hampstead ; and glad indeed was I to see that noble animal proudly regarding the universe from the porch of the hostelry which borrows his name ; but the “pleasant evening !” Alas ! alas ! it was Julia (if it were not decidedly impolite, I should say “the everlasting” Julia) who marred even the unaccustomed luxuries of the “White Hart,” and totally destroyed Jack’s equable spirits and my comfort in his society. Moreton was “a fixed point” in our plans, and here Jack looked for an answer to his numerous and bulging epistles to his fair beloved. But in vain ; letters there were for both of us, but not one word from Julia. Either that fair damsel was “false as she was fair,” or perchance her friends had indeed taken her abroad. Jack was downhearted all the next day (Sunday) ; he refused to be comforted, and saying he “had some writing to do”—probably more Julia—he left me to mine own devices. In the morning I obeyed the loud calls of the church bells, and formed one of a large and attentive congregation in the parish church, and before lunch I strolled up Moreton Hill, on the Exeter Road, for about a mile, and got for my pains a wonderful view of Dartmoor with its tor broken sky-line. The “mild refection” of lunch, and, possibly, the relief of his morning’s “out-pourings” on paper, brought Jack round to a more companionable frame of mind, and we spent the afternoon in a ramble to the pretty village of North Bovey, a pleasing exception to the general rule of Devonshire villages, which are not often remarkable for their beauty. *This* village, however, possessed the unusual advantage of a wide tree-shaded space—the play-ground of the place, which formed the centre round which the thatched and irregularly placed cottages circled, the large

and handsome church lording it over the humble tenements. A quiet smoke on the bridge over the bright, clear Bovey stream, whence the parish takes its name, brought us on to the dinner hour, and strolling back to Moreton, a pleasant sight from the Bovey Road as it nestled round its church, backed by high green hills, we dined, and talked (Julia again to the fore), and so to bed.

Monday found Jack more resigned and looking forward to news at Chagford, our bourn for that night, and, as we had planned, for a week's exploring of Dartmoor, upon whose bleak borders Chagford lies. But the Teign, the Teign, not even the hasty expectations of the anxious lover could make me abandon my river, and the day's march along its banks was, we were told at Moreton, something to be remembered for loveliness. And so we found it; for, retracing our steps to Fingle Bridge, we crossed the river, and pursued our pleasant way along a rutty roadway a few feet above the river on its right bank. The scenery was wild and wonderful, for the stream here is closed in with high, impending heights, a small mossy oak wood, beloved of pleasure parties (if broken bottles and nasty greasy pieces of paper are to be believed), faces a little weir, while higher up the stream breaks around a small alder-covered island.

The day was cloudy, and we passed one or two fishermen pursuing their "gentle (?) craft" and whipping the stream; with some success, too, for one white-chokered cleric landed a couple of struggling, silver-gleaming trout as Jack and I paused to watch him for a few moments. Ahead of us now was a bare, fir-crowned hill, and above us, to the right, a high granite-tipped hill, round whose sharp summit two ravens were wheeling and sailing. Whilst our fisherman was placing his last catch in the basket he carried at his side, we ventured to ask him some questions as to our route. He informed us we could follow the stream right up to Chagford, some three miles off; and on Jack's remarking on the bold character of the scenery, he told us that the heights above Fingle were ancient British encampments, forts constructed by the dwellers in these upland parts to protect them from the raids of the lowland folk who had their habitation in the plains beyond.

Shortly after bidding our courteous friend farewell, we came upon a huge rock, the guardian of this enchanted valley, for here the gorges ended, and the river flowed through meads and fields again. Close by this rock the stream rushes through a narrow passage, between two great boulders, and from rock to rock a one-plank bridge is stretched, the way to Whiddon Park, a stretch of green-sward, adorned with clumps of huge trees, surrounding a large house on the other side of the Teign, and peopled with graceful deer. A long walk through meadows, past a mill, past a bridge, past a large white tree-bowered mansion on the right, and the river sweeps away to the left, and soon brings us within sight of Chagford Town, stretching its white length on

the slope of a hill crowned with its high church tower, and with a large red house peeping out from the trees on its left. A bold, bare hill forms the background to the town, and behind and to the right is the wide range of Dartmoor. A stroll through meadows brought us to a mill, and passing through its yard, we came upon the road to Chagford. A sharp push up a steep hill and we are in the little town; and breasting a steep, hilly street, we soon come upon the "Three Crowns Inn," a most antique hostelry with a deep stone porch and many mullioned windows. Poor Jack seemed doomed to disappointment, for neither here, also, did the anxiously looked for missive await him, and grim despair seized him for her own. This was becoming monotonous; I could stand the melancholy condition of things no longer; and as this afternoon's tramp could bring us to the source or near the source of our river, I determined to forego the exploring of the moor, and to return home on the morrow. Chagford, with its fine moorland air, its many "outings" to various parts of the moor, its fishing and shooting, is becoming every year more popular; the large boarding houses in the little town itself, and the many old farm-houses where such accommodation could be got, were, we were told, crowded, and could have been filled over and over again. Leaving the curious, old-world, sleepy-looking little town, we made for Holy Street Mill, beloved and much painted abode of artists. The old mill itself, picturesque in its tumble-down decay, has adorned the walls of many a picture gallery. Having gained permission at the ancient mullion-windowed mill house—for this part of the river is strictly private—we followed the course of the stream over rocks and through tangled paths to Gidleigh Park, a large and picturesque thatched house stretching a broad frontage to the stream. Passing a rustic bridge—the approach to the house—we continued our course, a very difficult one here, over huge boulders, which demanded the most wary of footholds, with the Teign on our right, now thundering through narrow fissures, and now broadening into deep and gloomy pools. Up the tree-shaded, rocky valley we toiled for about a mile, until we emerged at last upon the open moor. Still toiling on we made for Kistor, and from the rocky summit of that tor we followed with our eyes the wanderings of the now tiny Teign till we lost sight of our friend in the far-off recesses of the gloomy moor.

The shades of evening were closing around, and the darkening moor was anything but inviting-looking; so after bidding our pleasant river a lingering farewell, we left the little streamlet to its weird and solitary home, and leaving Kistor, that mighty monarch of the moor, behind us, we faced a magnificent expanse of country, and hastening down the hills, we soon got back to Chagford.

"There's a boy from Moreton with a letter for one of you gentlemen," said mine host as we came in, unconscious of the

bliss involved in this announcement. Bliss indeed, for the letter was for Jack, and from no less a person than the adored Julia. Faithless? hard-hearted? a consummate flirt? Not she. Threats and warnings had alike proved in vain; Jack she *must* have, and Jack she *would* have, and no other; and as she was an only child, and an obstinate one to boot, Jack she *did* have, and has to this present day a proud and happy husband. It was all I could do to prevent him from rushing off then and there; and very early the next morning I heard him tramping about in the next room to mine. Scant time for breaking my fast did he allow me, so nervous was he about catching the train at Moreton. "Haste thee, then, oh loitering Devonshire groom! Bring round a trap at once—at once! Look sharp, Standish! What on earth are you——?" "I *must* pay the bill, Jack; you don't want to be 'took up' for a swindler, eh?" And so, hey! for Moreton, the railway station, Exeter, London, Pump Court for me, and for Jack—Julia!

A WONDERFUL STORY.

With an Illustration.

IN the literature of modern travel we find many vivid descriptions of a single false step and the terrible sensation which comes on in the swift rush of a violent fall. By way of useful warning in the holiday season, we introduce a striking passage and illustration from the half-forgotten book of a well-known author, "The Marvellous Country; or Three Years in Arizona and New Mexico," by S. W. Cozzens.

In this pleasant medley of travelling gasconade and genuine history the writer leads the reader through the strange land of Montezuma, describing in a very picturesque manner its singular natural features and life amongst the wild tribes. Accompanied by a droll Irishman named "Jimmy," who appears to have possessed the nine lives of a cat, he treats us to a variety of extraordinary adventures. Here is one:

The conversation drifted towards the bravery of the Zunis; and the cacique (or governor, who is also the high priest of the Zunis) recounted many of the legends concerning his ancestors—of the intrepidity and courage shown by them in resisting the attacks of the Spaniards as well as of the Apaches and Navajoes; until, warming with the subject, he insisted upon accompanying and showing me the very spot where the attack had been made by Coronado's army, and which had so nearly proved fatal to that great chief.

The old man seemed so anxious that we should once more visit the site of old Zuni, and in his company, that the doctor and myself, nothing loth to again witness its beauties, accepted the invitation, only requiring that the visit should be paid during the afternoon, as on the morrow we had determined to start for the Rio Grande.

Expressing his regrets at our hasty departure, with many assurances of his respect and good will, the old man left us, promising to call for us later in the afternoon.

Dinner over, we informed Jimmy of our intention, strictly enjoining upon him the necessity of remaining in camp during our absence, as well as expressly forbidding him to receive or entertain any visitors, to each of which injunctions Jimmy promised the most implicit obedience.

It was late in the afternoon when we started, in company with the cacique, to view the place which three hundred and twenty years before a little handful of Spaniards had so gallantly assaulted and carried by storm,—the ancient city of Cibola, where, as the cacique informed us, the Zunis had won a name for themselves that would never be forgotten.

Passing the "Sacred Spring," and down through the narrow rocky gorge at the foot of the mesa, we commenced to climb the steep and rugged path that led to the height above us.

We made our first halt upon a terrace, or ledge, about two hundred and fifty feet above the plain. Around the outer edge of this terrace formerly had been constructed a wall of rock, traces of which were plainly discernible, and must have afforded complete protection against any assaulting party, so perfectly did it command the only means of approach. Indeed, it seemed to us that a dozen men might have successfully held it against a thousand.

Standing upon the narrow ledge, scarcely ten feet in width, the old man depicted in glowing terms the contest, and told us how they had hurled great rocks from the wall upon the heads of the invaders of their homes; how the great chief himself had been felled to the earth by one of them, and of blood flowing like water.

Indeed, the old man seemed never to tire of the subject; and as we slowly made our way up the difficult path, listening to the earnest and impressive traditions regarding the valour of his ancestors, I could but sympathize with him when he said, "The Zunis were a happy and prosperous people until the Spaniards came among them; they warred for the protection of their homes and for the honour of their women, it is true, but the strife was never of their own seeking; * they only fought when obliged to ;

* A statement not confirmed by Coronado's report of the condition in which he found the adjoining kingdoms in 1540. See Coronado's report to the Emperor Charles V.

then they fought honestly, man to man; there was no nation that could stand against the Zunis.

"Montezuma had protected them since the creation of the earth. Had he not instructed them how to manufacture their own clothing; to raise their food out of the ground; to raise flocks and herds; to build houses to live in? Were they not more prosperous than the wild tribes who wandered over the country but to destroy and lay waste?

"They had always prospered until the Spaniards came. Then all was changed. From the day that those people came, they had been cursed.

"Montezuma no longer regarded them with his former love; the Spaniards had made his heart cold towards them; but the Great Spirit would again kindle the flame in his heart. It must be a punishment that he had sent upon them, because they, his children, had permitted the sacred flame to burn dimly that he had kindled with his own hands upon the altar of the *estufus*; but they relied upon the promise he had made them, that he would one day return and lead them, as of old—for was not Montezuma the very embodiment of truth?"

In this garrulous, simple manner the old man entertained us as we toiled up the steep, precipitous sides of the mesa, enchaining our attention so completely that we gave heed to but little else, and had actually ascended the highest of the three terraces before I was aware that we were standing upon a narrow shelf scarcely twelve inches in width, although eight hundred feet above the plain.

When I at length realized the fact, I was indeed startled at the novel and perilous situation in which we found ourselves; nor were my fears in the least allayed by noticing the nervous and excited manner with which Don Rafael, who seemed ever on the alert for our safety, called our attention to the fast-growing darkness, as he urged us to at once commence the descent.

Upon our left was a huge wall of rock and earth, towering nearly three hundred feet above our heads, and apparently so smooth as not to afford footing for a living creature, while upon our right for nearly eight hundred feet below was empty space.

The dizzy height at which we stood, the narrow path before us, the vast abyss below, the growing darkness, the danger of the descent, all seemed to have been forgotten in the desire to hear the old man, who still kept on in his low monotone, utterly oblivious of everything save the Zunis and their history; when, carelessly stepping upon a small stone which rolled under my foot, before I could possibly recover myself I was precipitated over the bluff, and in a moment found myself sliding down its almost perpendicular side, feet foremost.

In the twinkling of an eye I was far beyond the reach of my companions, who, upon hearing the noise made by my fall, turned



I. FALL THREE HUNDRED FEET.

See "A WONDERFUL STORY."

towards me, and stood aghast, but powerless to aid me. My first thought was, that I should be dashed to pieces upon the rocks at the foot of the bluff; the next that I might possibly manage to save myself upon one of the terraces beneath.

All this time I was acquiring greater momentum, until it seemed as though I was fairly flying into the very arms of the horrible death which stood staring me so steadily in the face. Not a bush or shrub could I see growing upon the precipitous sides; there was nothing, absolutely nothing, for me to cling to, and the stones and earth which I disturbed in my descent were falling in a shower around me.

Convinced that death was inevitable, I became perfectly reconciled to the thought. My mind comprehended in a moment the acts of a life-time. Transactions of the most trivial character, circumstances the remembrance of which had been buried deep in memory's vault for years, stood before me in bold relief; my mind recalled with the rapidity of lightning, and yet retained a distinct impression of every thought.

I seemed to be gliding swiftly and surely out of the world, but felt no fear, experienced no regret at the thought; on the contrary, rejoiced that I was so soon to see with my own eyes the great mystery concealed behind the veil; that I was to cross the deep waters and be at rest.

I thought I heard the sound of many voices, in wonderful harmony, coming from the far-off distance, though from what direction I could not tell.

My momentum had become so great that I seemed to experience much difficulty in breathing; and I remember that I was trying to explain to my own satisfaction why this should be so, when the heel of my right boot struck the corner of a small stone that chanced to be firmly embedded in the earth, and therefore offered so much resistance to my descent, that upon striking it I was thrown forward upon my face. This stone without doubt saved my life.

I have a clear recollection that as I was thrown forward, I instinctively threw my arms out, whether to act as a protection to my face, or to enable me to grasp something, I do not know; but one of my hands struck against the sharp edge of something, and I grasped it and clung to it with a tenacity that a dying man only can understand.

I have always since that day understood perfectly the feeling that induces a drowning man to catch at a straw that he sees floating near him.

How it was that I succeeded in grasping it, or holding it, or managing to make it afford me a kind of support, I have no idea.

I remember of thinking that I had stopped; of being aware that I was bleeding badly; of wondering if I was dead, and why

such an eternity of time had elapsed since my foot had slipped; and then darkness closed around me.

I was aroused by a sharp pain in my left arm, and opening my eyes saw two or three persons standing around me, whom I did not recognize, though I realized the fact that I was not dead, and immediately relapsed once more into a state of insensibility, to be again aroused by a terrible twinge of pain in my arm.

Opening my eyes, I saw the doctor with a pair of scissors, which I recognized as my own, in his hand, with which he seemed to be engaged in cutting my coat-sleeve, while a confused mass of something seemed above and around him on all sides. At first I could not seem to understand what it meant, then I knew them to be human faces, and then——

When I next awoke I was lying in my blankets, with, I was sure, a broken arm, and was pretty well convinced by the feeling of my body that I had not a bone in it that was not in some manner injured. The doctor was sitting a short distance from me complacently smoking his pipe, in the bright light of the camp-fire.

I said to him, "Well, old fellow, you seem to be taking it easy."

He replied, "Yes; and if you know when you're well off, you'll do the same thing. Go to sleep again, and in the morning you shall know about it."

Reader, I obeyed orders, because I couldn't help it. I went to sleep.

* * * * *

"Is it likely to die he is, docther?" were the first words that saluted my ears upon awaking the next morning.

I lay perfectly still, and with closed eyes listened for the doctor's reply.

"Die? Not he; he'll be all right in a week."

"Faith, an' it's *wake* anuf now he is," replied Jimmy. "How long will we be here, docther?"

"Ten days at least," answered the doctor.

I fancied I could discern a tone of genuine satisfaction in Jimmy's voice in the "Thank yez, sur," with which he responded to the doctor's reply to his inquiry. Opening my eyes, I said, "I'm sorry you told Jimmy that, doctor; we have been annoyed enough by him, and if he thinks we are to remain here ten days longer, I fear we shall have more trouble with him."

"Not a bit of it," cheerily replied the doctor. "Jimmy's heart is still sore, and he's not likely to fall in love again, for the present, at least. Do you know that I believe he really had a strong fancy for that girl? Never mind that, however; it was a 'touch and go' with you, old fellow, last night. How's your arm this morning, and how do you feel?"

"Sore! Tell me about it, doctor."

"Tell you about it? I wish I could. The first thing we knew of your mishap, we saw you going down the face of the bluff on your back, at a rate of speed that would have put to shame old Pegasus himself, without even the compliment of notifying us of your intended trip. It was some seconds before I comprehended the situation, and even then we could neither of us do anything, and certainly never expected to see you alive again.

"We listened, and heard you call from away down below that you were 'all right;' and then Don Rafael started off like the wind, and almost before the old cacique or I had had time to collect our senses, and think how we could render you any assistance, he was back with half a dozen Zunis and some lariats. I declare I don't think he was gone five minutes. When you think of the distance he was obliged to travel to the *pueblo* and back, it seems incredible that he could have gotten over the ground in such a short space of time.

"They went to the terrace above you, and Don Rafael and one of the Zunis were lowered to the spot where you lay, attached the ropes around your body, and you were then hoisted, more dead than alive, to the ledge where the Zunis stood, after which you were carried upon their shoulders to the plain below. We laid you upon the grass, and I made an examination to ascertain the extent of your injuries, and greatly to my satisfaction and delight found that your only serious injury was a broken arm. I managed to successfully set it, after which you were brought here. It was really a most wonderful escape; the thing couldn't be done once in ten thousand times; for, with the exception of your broken arm, which isn't a bad fracture by any means, and some pretty rough old bruises, you are quite unharmed. A few days will set you all right again. I only wish I had some arnica for you."

"But, doctor, have you none? You had a bottle."

"A bottle! Yes, but not enough to do you much good, though. I would as soon think of anointing a whale with a pint of water. I have ordered you some soup, and am going up to the *pueblo* to ascertain if the Zunis have any remedies which they successfully use for bruises."

Jimmy soon after made his appearance with a bowl of hot mutton broth. While partaking of it, he entertained me with an amusing account of my fall, viewed from his standpoint, evidently conceiving the idea that it was occasioned by some experiment I had been making to find a shorter cut to the plain below; "for," said he, "'twas an awful fall yer got, Juge, an' whin Don Rafael cum runnin' into the town beyant thare, an sed yer'd fall'n from the top ov the bluff, and wuz kilt intirely from the ifficts ov it, I thought I shud die misilf from the fright I got. But I'm thankful to see yez will, sur, an' able to take yer soup."

In a very short time after Jimmy left me, I dropped into a

quiet slumber, from which I was aroused by the arrival of the doctor in company with a woman that he had procured to give me treatment, *a la* Zuni.

The woman, by no means a bad-looking one, was about forty-five years of age, quite well preserved, and altogether a better specimen than the average of Zuni women.

She at once commenced bathing my body with a lotion prepared from herbs, which seemed to give me almost instant relief. She was remarkably neat and cleanly in her personal appearance, and the gay-coloured ribbons with which her head was adorned, together with a bright scarlet jacket, gave to her quite a coquettish air.

Later in the day, when the cacique came to see me, I was sufficiently free from pain to be able to sit up and converse with him; and for an hour or more I was agreeably entertained by the many interesting facts concerning the Zunis, their legends and traditions, as well as those relating to the Moquis country, which he never tired of telling.

So ends the narrative, concerning which the author adds in his contents: "If you doubt me, try it yourself!" Sensible people will avoid risky experiments on holiday occasions. A good "outing" need not become a source of special danger. The wild spots of Nature should always be approached with caution. Above all—those who come limp from city life should not make any rash attempt to perform feats which demand the steady nerve and sure foot of a trained mountaineer.
